

Allah and the Mind

Integrating Faith and Psychology

Afshan Sultana



BlueRoseONE.com
S t o r i e s M a t t e r

New Delhi • London

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS

India | U.K.

Copyright © Afshan Sultana 2026

All rights reserved by author. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the author. Although every precaution has been taken to verify the accuracy of the information contained herein, the publisher assumes no responsibility for any errors or omissions. No liability is assumed for damages that may result from the use of information contained within.

BlueRose Publishers takes no responsibility for any damages, losses, or liabilities that may arise from the use or misuse of the information, products, or services provided in this publication.



BlueRose ONE com
S t o r i e s M a t t e r
New Delhi • London

For permissions requests or inquiries regarding this publication,
please contact:

BLUEROSE PUBLISHERS
www.BlueRoseONE.com
info@bluerosepublishers.com
+91 8882 898 898
+4407342408967

ISBN: 978-93-7310-155-2

Cover design: Yash
Typesetting: Namrata Saini

First Edition: March 2026

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

All the praises is for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds
(mankind, jinn and all that exists)

The Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

The Only Owner (and the Only Ruling Judge) of the Day
of Resurrection

You Alone we worship, and You Alone we seek for help

Guide us to the Straight Way

The Way of those on whom You have bestowed Your
Grace, not the way of those who earned Your Anger (such
as the Jews), nor of those who went astray.

Acknowledgment

All praise and gratitude belong to Allah Subhanahu Wa Ta'la, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of wisdom and guidance. I dedicate this humble work to the Creator, who blessed me with the gift of life, surrounded me with knowledge, and guided me through every step of this journey.

I am deeply thankful for the selfless dedication of my parents, whose love, values, and support, have shaped my journey in the most beautiful and meaningful way. I wholeheartedly thank my husband and my children for being my greatest strength throughout this endeavour.

With utmost humility, I dedicate this work to the noble sacrifices of our beloved Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), whose tireless efforts, immense love for his Ummah, and unwavering desire for our salvation continue to illuminate hearts across generations. May this book serve, even in the smallest way, as a means of honouring his legacy, and vision for an enlightened, united, and spiritually grounded Ummah.

A Note to the Readers

In this era of unprecedented advancement, human knowledge is expanding across diverse fields. Every individual is striving to grow, seeking understanding, and attempting to navigate the complexities of life in a more advanced way than ever. Amid this continuous evolution, the need for clarity, reflection, and meaningful guidance has become increasingly essential.

The human race has reached heights once thought impossible; discoveries are unfolding, and innovations are shaping every aspect of life. We are, without doubt, successful by worldly measures. In this age of great achievement, an important question arises: as we advance in material possessions, are we progressing equally in happiness? The truth is simple yet profound: material advancement does not equal happiness.

Today, humanity has become enslaved by wealth, chasing numbers, possessions, and status, forgetting that peace cannot be purchased and love cannot be owned. Money may fill our hands, but only faith, gratitude, and purpose can fill our hearts.

Allah says in the Quran:

“And whoever turns away from My remembrance - indeed, he will have a depressed life, and We shall raise him blind on the Day of Resurrection.”—Surah Ta-Ha (20:124)

Genuine happiness is a state of inner peace that blossoms only when the remembrance of Allah Subḥānahu Wa

Ta‘ala is placed at the heart of one’s existence. When this divine alignment is maintained, life naturally draws goodness toward itself, much like a centripetal force. However, when the remembrance of Allah Subḥanahu Wa Ta‘ala ceases to occupy the centre of our hearts, the light of happiness begins to fade, drifting away like a centrifugal force.

As our beloved Prophet Muhammad Sallallahu Alaihi Wasallam, said:

“Whoever makes the Hereafter his concern, Allah will place richness in his heart, bring his affairs together, and the world will come to him.

And whoever makes the world his concern, Allah will place poverty before his eyes, scatter his affairs, and he will receive nothing from the world except what was already written for him.” — Sunan Ibn Majah

This book was written to offer insight, and gentle guidance to those exploring the depths of the human psyche, while guiding readers toward healing, meaning and the light of faith.

Contents

Chapter 1: Purpose of Life – Mission and Vision of a Believer	1
Chapter 2: The Inner Trinity- Logic, Emotion, and Wisdom	24
Chapter 3: The Essence and Evolution of Personality	35
Chapter 4: Parenting - A Conscious Perspective.....	50
Chapter 5: Career & Carrier	74
Chapter 6: Biopsyche	87
Chapter 7: Psychosomatic Illness.....	101
Chapter 8: Mind – The Silent Power Within.....	117
Chapter 9: The Psychology of Language: The Impact of Words	129
Chapter 10: Emotion Focused Therapy	144
Chapter 11: The Brain’s lens and Neural Web	156
Chapter 12: Digital Dominance: A Growing Threat to Humanity.....	171
Chapter 13: Heart and Hearth – A Test of Patience and A Path to Reward	181
Chapter 14: Guilt and Repentance: Healing Through Tawbah	201
References.....	207

CHAPTER 1

Purpose of Life – Mission and Vision of a Believer

“And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, and no compensation will be accepted from it, nor will any intercession benefit it, nor will they be aided” —Surah Al- Baqarah (2:123)

Life is never accidental.

When Almighty Allah (SWT) brings us into existence and places us in this world, it is with perfect wisdom and purpose. Every soul is entrusted with a divine mission—a sacred responsibility bestowed by its Creator.

The Qur'an proclaims this truth with absolute clarity, defining the very purpose of life:

*“And I did not create jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”
—Surah Adh-Dhariyat (51:56)*

Worshipping Allah (SWT) begins with fulfilling the fundamental duties upon every believer—five essential acts of worship known as the Five Pillars of Islam: declaring the testimony of faith (Shahadah), performing the five daily prayers (Salah), giving the obligatory charity (Zakat), fasting during the month of Ramadan (Sawm), and performing the sacred pilgrimage to the House of Allah in Makkah (Hajj) for those whom Allah has granted the ability and means.

In addition to these foundational pillars, worship extends into every dimension of life—a continuous expression of obedience, humility, gratitude, compassion, and sincerity toward the Creator. Allah commands believers not only to submit through ritual worship, but to embody righteousness in character, conduct, and relationships.

Honouring and serving one's parents is an act of worship, as Allah(SWT) says:

“Worship Allah and associate nothing with Him, and be good to parents.” —Surah An-Nisa (4:36)

Helping humanity is worship, for the Prophet Muhammad(SAW) taught:

“The most beloved people to Allah are those who are most beneficial to others.” (Al-Tabarani. Al-Mu‘jam al-Awsat,)

Maintaining family ties, especially when it is difficult—is worship, as Prophet Muhammad(SAW) said:

“The one who truly maintains ties is the one who continues even when others cut him off.” (Sahih Bukhari)

Controlling one's desires and striving against the self is worship, for Allah praises those *“who restrain their desires.”* (Surah An-Nazi'at 79:40)

Repenting sincerely is worship, and Allah says:

“Indeed, Allah loves those who repent.” (Surah Al-Baqarah 2:222)

Forgiving others for the sake of Allah is worship, as He commands:

“Let them pardon and overlook. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you?” (Surah An-Nur 24:22)

Living by the teachings of the Qur'an and following the Messenger of Allah(SWT) in every aspect of life—both private and public—is itself an act of worship. Indeed, true guidance and divine love are attained through obedience to His Messenger.

Allah(SWT) says: *Say [O Prophet]: "If you should love Allah, then follow me, [and] Allah will love you and forgive you your sins; for Allah is Ever-forgiving and Ever-Merciful".* (Surah Al-Imran 3:31) and Allah(SWT) commands, *"Whatever the Messenger gives you—take it, and whatever he forbids you—refrain from it"* (Al-Hashr 59:7).

Allah(SWT) says, *"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever hopes in Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often."* (Al-Ahzab 33:21), and affirms that *"Whoever obeys the Messenger has indeed obeyed Allah but whoever turns away—We have not sent you [O Prophet] as a guardian over them."* (An-Nisa 4:80). Allah(SWT) further instructs, *"Say, [O Prophet,] 'O humanity! I am the Messenger of Allah to you all—[the One] to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. There is no god but Him. He gives life and causes death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, who believes in Allah and His words, and follow him so that you may be guided."* and emphasizes, *"Say, 'Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, then he is only responsible for his duty and you are responsible for yours. And if you obey him, you will be [rightly] guided..."* (An-Nur 24:54).

Allah(SWT) says: *" [We sent them] with clear proofs and written ordinances. And We revealed to you [O' Prophet] the message so that you make clear to the people what has been sent down to them and that they might give thought."* (An-Nahl 16:44).

Through these verses, Allah(SWT)shows that following the teachings of the Prophet(S.A.W) is inseparable from true worship. He is the ultimate role model for believers in every aspect of life—not only in acts of worship, but also in character, conduct, leadership, family life, patience, mercy, justice, and complete reliance upon Allah(SWT).

Every sincere act, every sacrifice, every moment of restraint, and every return to Allah becomes a step toward fulfilling our divine purpose. This world is a test , and our mission is to pass it with sincerity, faith, patience, and perseverance. Allah (SWT) reminds us:

“Did you think that We created you in play (without any purpose), and that you would not be brought back to Us?” —Surah Al-Mu’minun (23:115)

In Islam, we are not left to wander aimlessly or to invent our own meaning in life. Allah(SWT) has already defined our mission and given us a clear purpose. This sacred mission is continually shaped and refined by our personal experiences, emotional growth, psychological journey, social surroundings, family influences, moments of introspection, and the depth of our faith (Iman). Through every challenge, every blessing, and every return to Allah, we move closer to fulfilling the divine purpose of our existence.

Science and spirituality both affirm that a child’s journey begins in the mother’s womb. The womb is more than a biological organ; it is the first sanctuary of life. A mother’s emotional well-being and spiritual state, her hopes, experiences, prayers, and intentions for her child – all influences the earliest layers of her child’s development, forming the foundational blue print for life even before birth. Moreover, a child is shaped not only by the genetic

inheritance alone but also by the epigenetic whispers of the mother's inner and outer world.

When the child enters this world with the pre natal blue print, new layers of personality begin to form. Parents, environment, early interactions, and experiences further mould the growing self, gradually shaping the unique personality that unfolds over time.

Psychological theorists such as Erik Erikson describe life as a journey unfolding through distinct stages, each marked by developmental challenges such as identity, purpose, relationships, confidence, and meaning.

In childhood, a sense of purpose begins to take shape as curiosity and imagination guide the child towards possibilities. Entering adolescence, the focus shifts towards relationships, where friendship and belonging shape one's social world. During the teenage years and into adulthood, the challenge is to build confidence, to trust one's abilities, make decisions, and stand firm in identity. As life matures, the search often shifts towards meaning, a deeper reflection on self-discovery, legacy, contribution and spiritual fulfilment that extends beyond self.

Spiritually, these challenges deepen. At every stage we face temptations from Shaytan, the confusion between right and wrong, and the constant struggle to remain on the straight path. Along the way, we make mistakes. We fall, and at times we may drift far. Yet the true believer always returns. Through Tawbah (repentance), we rise again. With Istighfar (seeking forgiveness), we cleanse the heart. With Ilm (knowledge), we refine our vision. And with new understanding, we build new habits, reshape our lives, and renew our purpose.

Psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl emphasized that the “search for meaning” is the primary motivation in human life. People flourish when they sense that their life have purpose, whether in raising a child, serving others, striving for a livelihood, or nurturing faith. When meaning is lost—after failure, grief, or weakening of faith, life feels empty. Healing begins with rediscovering purpose. Frankl also observed that “Human beings are not destroyed by suffering itself, but by suffering without meaning”.

Even in suffering, if one can uncover meaning, endurance becomes possible. When hardship draws a person closer to Allah(SWT), it becomes a hidden blessing. But if it distances one from Him, it becomes a heavy trial. The true vision of life is to turn every experience, whether joy or sorrow, into a step closer to Allah(SWT).

Our vision is to cultivate clarity—to know who we are, where we are headed, and what kind of legacy we wish to leave behind. It is to seek contentment not in material possessions, but in pleasing Allah, loving His Messenger (S.A.W), and serving His creation.

Vision is the inner compass through which a believer fulfills the divine mission entrusted by Allah (SWT). It shapes intention, directs conduct, and aligns the heart with faith, discipline, and self-awareness. The following outlines some of the key elements of this Vision

1. Intention in Islam: The Foundation of Every Deed

In Islam, intention (niyyah) is the soul of our actions. Without the right intention, even the most noble deeds lose their value. But with the right intention, even the smallest actions are elevated in the sight of Allah(SWT).

When your intention begins with Allah, your journey becomes divine, but when it begins with people, it ends with people's approval. Even those with righteous hearts may sometimes misunderstand your intentions, not because they are ill-intentioned, but because human perception is limited and is prone to errors in thinking. only Allah(SWT) alone knows the purity behind every word, thought, and action.

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said:

“Actions are judged by intentions, and every person will get the reward according to what he intended.”(Sahih al-Bukhari & Sahih Muslim)

This hadith reminds us that inner motive matters more than outward action. You could give charity, seek knowledge, or help someone, but if it's for show, praise, or ego, it holds no weight in the Hereafter. Yet even a smile or kind word becomes worship if done for Almighty Allah's sake.

A Believer doesn't separate spirituality from daily life. With correct intention, even mundane tasks like cooking, parenting, working, or studying transform into acts of Ibadah (worship). This unifies life under a single mission: remembrance of Allah(SWT).

“Say, indeed, my prayer, my devotion, my life and my death are for Allah(SWT), Lord of the worlds.” —Surah Al-An 'am (6:162)

From a psychological perspective, intention is closely related to goal-setting, motivation, and self-regulation. Researchers note that setting an intention provides the mind with direction, focusing thoughts, energy, and behaviour. Cognitive-behavioural psychology emphasizes

that thoughts influence feelings, which in turn guide actions. In this way, intention becomes a guiding mental blueprint, shaping both mindset and behaviour.

Studies also show that when individuals set value-driven intentions (not merely for external rewards), they experience deeper fulfilment, greater resilience, and a stronger sense of meaning in life, closely resembling the spiritual satisfaction described in Islam.

2. Righteousness

“Righteousness is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west(in prayers), but righteousness is that one who believes in Allah(SWT), and the Last Day, and the Angels, and the Book, and the Prophets, and gives wealth, despite it’s love to relatives, and to orphans, the needy, the traveller, and to those who ask(for help) and for freeing slaves; (and who)establishes prayer and pays the zakah; (those who) fulfil their promise when they promise; and (those who) are patient in poverty and hardships and during battle. Those are the one’s who have been true, and it is those who are the righteous.” — Surah Al-Baqarah (2:177)

Fitnah: A Hidden Test of the Soul

One of the greatest obstacles on the path to righteousness is “fitnah”, the hidden tests of faith. In the Qur’an and Sunnah, fitnah is any test, temptation, or disturbance that can shake a person’s faith or morals. Fitnah may manifest in many forms: temptation, doubt, greed, envy, pride or arrogance. Even acts of virtue can foster pride if one starts to see oneself as better than others. May Allah (SWT) safeguard each one of us from fitnah of arrogance and self – glorification.

The Qur'an illustrates the devastating effect of pride through the story of Iblis. When Allah(SWT) commanded the angels to prostrate to Adam, all obeyed except Iblis. As the Qur'an states:

Except Iblees, he refused to be with those who prostrated, [Allah] said, 'O Iblis, what is (the matter) with you that you are not with those who prostrate?' He said, "Never would I prostrate to a human being whom You created out of clay from an altered black mud." —Surah Al-Hijr (15:31–33)

Indeed, All goodness is from Allah (SWT) alone; even the ability to reflect, pray, or fast is a gift from Him. If Allah (SWT) had not shown mercy on us, we would have been astray from our path. It is His compassion that gathers our scattered hearts, and guidance that keeps our steps firm when the world grows dark.

3. The Balance of the Heart — Between Joy and Sorrow

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) likened life to a traveller resting under the shade of a tree for a short while before continuing his journey. He said: *"What do I have to do with this world? I am in this world like a rider who seeks shade under a tree, then he leaves it."* — *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*,

Every moment in this world is a test, and every action is a seed for the Hereafter. We are therefore reminded not to become overly elated in moments of joy, nor sink into despair during hardship — for both ease and difficulty are temporary.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow proposed that life is shaped by a hierarchy of needs, progressing from basic survival to the highest level of personal fulfilment. The foundation

consists of physiological or survival needs—air, water, food, sleep, shelter, clothing, and the continuation of life. Once these are met, the next stage is safety and security, including physical safety, stability, and protection from harm. Beyond safety, humans seek love and belonging, through friendships, family bonds, and social connections. The fourth stage is esteem, encompassing self-respect, recognition from others, and a sense of accomplishment. At the top of the hierarchy lies self-actualization, the realization of one's full potential and the pursuit of meaningful purpose.

When individuals become overly focused on fulfilling the lower stages—constantly securing basic needs, seeking approval, or craving recognition—they may become less inclined toward self-actualization. The more time and energy spent entangled in survival, safety, social acceptance, or esteem, the longer it takes to reach the higher purpose of life: becoming the best version of ourselves and living in alignment with our deepest values.

True balance in life is achieved when we don't get stuck in survival mode but move steadily through each stage of growth. The faster we bring order to our physical, emotional, and social needs, the sooner we can focus on higher purpose of existence.

4. Consciousness: The Subtle Awareness Within

Consciousness, for a believer, means living with awareness of Allah(SWT) in every moment. It is the ability to recognize one's inner state—thoughts, intentions, emotions, and actions, while knowing that Allah sees us at all times. Life, therefore, is not merely about existing, but about being present with purpose.

True living, therefore, is not passive existence, but intentional presence: to live awake to the reality that every moment is a trust and every action is accountable.

The believer does not dwell in regret over the past nor anxiety about the future, for both are in the decree of Allah. What truly matters is the present moment—where intention is formed, choices are made, and obedience is enacted.

Hardship, too, becomes meaningful when met with consciousness. Trials do not break the believer; they refine the heart. Pain, when understood and processed, builds patience, strength, and closeness to Allah. This is part of Allah's wisdom in testing His servants. All praise is due to Allah (Subḥanahu wa Ta'ala), who created the human mind with the ability to grow, adapt, and find strength through trials.

Identity and Self-Concept: Who Am I?

Identity and self-concept are central to understanding consciousness. Identity and self-concept help us understand who we are and how we see ourselves. At the heart of consciousness lies a simple yet profound question: “Who am I?” When we ask this, we engage in self-reflection—the ability to look inward and examine our thoughts, actions, and purpose.

Each of us carries many identities in daily life. We are sons or daughters, parents, spouses, employees, friends, believers, dreamers etc. We move between these roles every day, adjusting our behavior according to different situations. Yet despite these changing roles, we remain one person.

Psychologist William James explained this by identifying two aspects of the self that are interconnected.

The “I-self” is the part of us that lives in the present moment—it thinks, feels, chooses, and acts. The “Me-self” is the reflective side of the self; it looks back, evaluates, and forms an understanding of who we are based on our experiences, social roles, personal history, and other influences.

When these two aspects work together, a person acts with awareness and reflects with honesty, allowing for learning and self-correction. This balance brings clarity, emotional stability, and purposeful direction. For example, When the heart (qalb) is alive and conscious, the two aspects of the self work together. The believer acts with awareness (*I-self*), and reflects with sincerity and accountability (*Me-self*). If a mistake occurs, the heart immediately feels it, leading to repentance and correction.

However, when the “I-self” and the “Me-self” become incongruent — when a person acts without reflection or reflects without action, confusion and inner conflict arise.

5. Cleanliness - Path to Inner Clarity and Divine Connection

“A clean space lifts the mood; a clean self lifts the soul.”

Cleanliness is not just an outward act, it reflects inner discipline, and spiritual receptivity. From a psychological perspective, cleanliness reduces cognitive load: a cluttered environment constantly signals the brain, increasing stress and mental fatigue, while a clean and organized space activates the parasympathetic nervous system, calming the body. Whether it is taking a bath, wearing clean clothes, or

maintaining personal hygiene, these simple practices profoundly impact the mind, emotions, and soul.

Cleanliness fosters confidence, as a neat appearance often leads to better posture, clearer communication, and more organized thinking. It starts a positive chain reaction of mindful living.

In Islam *“Cleanliness is half of faith.”— Sahih Muslim*

This Hadith emphasizes that maintaining personal hygiene and purity is not just a physical practice but a spiritual one, reflecting the integral role of cleanliness in a believers faith and daily life.

Cleanliness is a prerequisite for worship. Before one stands in front of Allah(SWT) in prayer, one is called to cleanse both mind and body Just as we perform wudu to cleanse our physical selves, we are also encouraged to purify the heart and mind. True worship requires the harmony of both.

Carrying envy, resentment, arrogance, or unresolved grudges within the heart is like standing in prayer with invisible stains. By releasing these negative emotions, we do not serve others but liberate ourselves. In doing so, the heart, mind, and soul are freed to regain their balance.

6. The Beauty of Gentleness

Gentleness is not just a quality, but a core principle of character.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said – “Allah(SWT) is Gentle and loves gentleness, and grants through gentleness what He does not grant through harshness” – Sahih Muslim.

Gentleness is one of the most beautiful qualities a human heart can carry. It softens interactions, brings warmth to relationships, and creates an atmosphere in which hearts open naturally.

7. Resilience

Life is uncertain. The ability to recover from setbacks, trauma, or failure, known as psychological resilience is crucial to living a fulfilling life. When calamities strike, the subconscious mind equips with the inner tools to endure—much like a soldier drawing upon weapons in the battlefield to survive. It is through these trials that resilience is forged and revealed.

When you look at those who have endured great hardships, you often notice a remarkable strength within them. Their resilience wasn't formed overnight—it was built through trials that tested their patience, faith, and emotional endurance.

In Islam, resilience is deeply rooted in faith (Iman) and trust in the Allah's wisdom (tawakkul). A resilient believer is one who remains patient (Sabr) during trials, knowing that hardships are a test and a means of purification. The Qur'an says:

"Indeed, with hardship comes ease." — Surah Ash- Sharh, (94:6)

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) portrays the perfect example of resilience, he faced hardships, yet remained steadfast, patient and kind. Resilience is not merely enduring pain, but also a means to get closer to Allah(SWT).

8. Understanding the Qur'an

“This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah” — Surah Al Baqarah (2:2)

Qur'an is the divine speech of Allah (SWT), a guide, a healing, a mercy and a companion in both this life and the hereafter. When a believer recites it, reflects upon it, or simply listens to it, the Qur'an nurtures the soul, softens the heart, and strengthens spiritual clarity.

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said:

“Recite the Qur'an, for on the Day of Resurrection it will come as an intercessor for those who recite it.”— (Sahih Muslim)

“Whoever recites a letter from the Book of Allah(SWT), he will receive one good deed as tenfold. I do not say that Alif-Laam-Meem is one letter, but Alif is a letter, Laam is a letter, and Meem is a letter.”— (Jami' at-Tirmidhi)

The Qur'an is Al-Furqan, the revealer of truth and the distinguisher between right and wrong. But if we recite the Quran without understanding its meaning, how can its guidance settle in our hearts or direct our lives?

Surah Sa'd (38:29) — “[This is] a blessed Book which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], so that they may reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.”

Surah Muhammad (47:24) — “Do they not then think deeply on the Qur'an, or are their hearts locked [from understanding]?”

It is our sole responsibility to recite the Qur'an with understanding, and only then will the true purpose of the Qur'an in the life of a believer be fulfilled.

The Qur'an is not merely a book to be honoured on our shelves; nor it is meant to be recited only on Fridays or during Ramadan. Its recitation and reflection must be a consistent, daily practice. Reciting at least two to three verses a day should not be neglected, as this practice fosters consistency and strengthens one connection with the Allah(SWT)

Indeed, it is a living guide to shape our path, and a radiant light to illuminate our hearts.

9. Prayer

The Azaan (call to prayer) is not merely an announcement of ritual worship; it is a divine reminder that resonates across the earth, summoning hearts back to their Creator. Islamic teachings strongly encourage maintaining silence and listening attentively when the Azaan is proclaimed. Even when one is engaged in work or daily responsibilities, pausing momentarily to reflect upon the call to prayer is itself an act of spiritual awareness and devotion.

While the world rushes forward in haste, the call to prayer invites the believer to slow down—to reconnect, to remember Allah, and to realign the heart with its true purpose. The Azaan marks both the beginning of our journey into this world, whispered into our ears at birth, and the final farewell at our departure, as we return to our Lord.

Among all the sounds heard upon this earth, the Azaan stands as one of the most powerful and blessed. It should never be ignored. Rather, one should pause, listen, respond, and allow its words to awaken the soul with meaning, direction, and purpose.

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said “Whoever says (the words of Azaan) after hearing the call to prayer from the heart, sincerely, will enter Paradise.”— (Sahih Muslim)

Salah(prayer) is a spiritual lifeline, a sign of true belief, a daily check-in that grounds us, heals us, and reminds us of our purpose. Salah is where the soul finds rest. Prayer is a means of guidance, remembrance and moral discipline that purifies the heart, and strengthens our connection with the Divine

- *“And establish prayer and give zakat and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience].” — Surah Al-Baqarah (2:43)*
- *“And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is difficult except for the humbly submissive [to Allah].” — Surah Al-Baqarah (2:45)*
- *“Observe the five obligatory prayers and (in particular) the middle prayer and stand before Allah with devotion.” — Surah Al-Baqarah (2:238)*
- *“Successful indeed are the believers : those who humble themselves in prayer.” — Surah Al-Mu’minun (23:1-2)*
- *“(O Prophet), recite the book that has been revealed to you and establish Prayer. Surely Prayer forbids immorality and wrongdoing. And remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows all that you do”. — Surah Al-Ankabut (29:45)*
- *“Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.” — Surah Taha (20:14)*

Salah is not optional. It is one of the five pillars of Islam — the very foundation of a believer's identity. A believer who does not pray or prays occasionally neglects the most essential practice that defines faith and surrender. Without consistent prayers, we lose our spiritual direction. With prayer, we rise — inwardly and outwardly.

What a grave loss it is that when Allah's call command us to prayer, at Fajr, we linger in the warmth of our beds. And as the call resounds four more times throughout the day, we become pre occupied with worldly matters, missing the blessing and guidance.

Physical Benefits of Prayer (Salah)

- Improved Flexibility and Posture
- Enhanced Blood Circulation
- Good Digestive Health
- Joint Health and Muscle Strength
- Improved Balance and Coordination
- Reduces Physical Fatigue

Psychological benefits

- **Stress Reduction**

Salah acts as a built-in mindfulness practice. Pausing the external world, and internally focusing the mind during prayer has a calming effect, reducing cortisol (stress hormone) levels.

The act of placing the forehead on the ground (sujood) is proven to lower heart rate and activate calming brain regions.

- **Improved Emotional Regulation**

Regular prayer teaches self-control, patience, and delayed gratification — all of which improve emotional resilience. Prayer provides a safe space to release emotions, confide in Allah(SWT), and seek peace.

- **Boosts Focus and Concentration**

The need for mental presence during Salah improves attention span, mental clarity, and self-awareness.

- **Decreases Anxiety and Depression**

Connection with Allah(SWT) through prayer reduces feelings of loneliness, hopelessness, and anxiety.

Sujood (prostration) — physically lowering oneself — is psychologically uplifting, creating a sense of surrender and emotional release.

- **Builds a Sense of Purpose and Identity**

It gives a reflection into our conduct and character, shaping the way we think, act, and interact with others. It reminds us the true purpose of our existence, helping you distinguish what is important from what is not. This spiritual grounding brings stability and peace.

10. Guarding the Tongue:

Feeling overwhelmed by excessive talking and socializing is a common experience, especially for those who value solitude and introspection. It's essential to recognize your emotional boundaries and take steps to regain your peace.

The Prophet Muhammad(S.A.W) said:

“Whoever believes in Allah(SWT) and the Last Day should speak good or remain silent.” Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim.

Speech should be intentional, not impulsive. Silence is often wiser than speaking without a careful thought.

“Man does not utter any word except that with him is an observer prepared[to record].” — Surah Qaf(50:18)

This verse reminds us that every word is recorded and carries accountability. So the ability to speak is a gift and a test.

Ali ibn Abi Talib (RA) said:

- “The tongue is like a lion. If you let it loose, it will wound someone.”

Scholars of Islam often practiced long silences, speaking only when it was for zikr (remembrance of Allah), truth, or necessary advice.

- *“...and speak kindly to Mankind.” —Surah Al-Baqarah (2:83)*
- *“Kind speech and forgiveness are better than charity followed by injury”. And Allah is Free of need and Forbearing — Surah Al-Baqarah (2:263).*
- “And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight, and the heart—about all those [one] will be questioned.”— Surah Al-Isra (17:36)
- *“And they who turn away from ill speech ” — Surah Al-Mu’minun (23:3)*
- *“O you who have believed, fear Allah and speak words of appropriate justice.” — Surah Al-Ahzab (33:70)*

- " And do not pursue that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the sight and the heart- about all those [one] will be questioned." — Surah Al-Isra (17:36)
- " O believers! Let not a people ridicule[another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women, perhaps they may be better than them. And do not insult one another, nor call each other by [offensive] nicknames. Wretched is the name of disobedience after [one's] faith. And whoever does not repent, it is those who are the 'true' wrongdoers." O believers! Avoid much [negative] assumptions. Indeed, some assumption is sin. And do not spy or backbite each another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of their dead brother? You would detest it. And fear Allah ; indeed, Allah is 'the' Acceptor of Repentance, Most Merciful". —Surah Al-Hujurat (49:11-12)

These Quranic verses urge believers to uphold purity of speech, kindness, justice, and humility, while refraining from harmful behaviors such as ridicule, suspicion, backbiting, and speaking without knowledge—thereby cultivating a society grounded in compassion, integrity, and accountability before Allah.

The Journey from Speech to Silence

Silence was never my first choice during childhood. I was someone who always leaned into speech. Silence, to me, often felt like a void needed to be filled with words.

Yet over the years, through countless conversations, interactions, and lived experiences, I uncovered a subtle

truth by the mercy of Allah(SWT) : not every moment requires words, nor does every silence demand explanation. Some silences are, in fact, sacred.

Speech still holds its place, and I value heartfelt conversations deeply. But silence has never disappointed me. I have learned to sit with it, to breathe in it, and sometimes, to let it speak louder than words ever could.

In a world that glorifies constant expression, choosing silence is a quiet act of wisdom. And in that quiet, I have found a deeper version of myself.

The Divine in Silence

The Divine often whispers. To feel that nearness, we must slow down, turn inward, and let our thoughts settle like dust in sunlight. In this stillness, the soul awakens, and clarity arises not from over thinking but from deeper listening. Be still, and you will know you are never alone.

Among life's greatest trials, especially in communal settings, is the pull toward gossip, frivolous and unnecessary talk. These habits erode the soul, leaving behind a burdened heart. For many, especially women engaged in family and social life, silence is not easy. Conversations often drift into judgments, gossips, sarcasm, or veiled taunts.

Every word carries energy, light or darkness. By choosing silence over gossip, we protect both ourselves and others. Silence closes the door to arrogance, and judgment, and keeps us connected to the mercy of Allah (SWT). In the pause between reaction and response, the heart becomes receptive to Divine whispers, cultivating mindfulness(Conscious awareness) and patience

Aligning Mission and Vision

Our mission descends from the heavens, while our vision is shaped upon the earth.

When the two are aligned—when the soul walks upon the mission ordained by Allah (SWT), and the heart embraces a vision grounded in faith, discipline, and self-awareness—life attains its true meaning. Only then does a person live with purpose, direction, and lasting fulfilment.

CHAPTER 2

The Inner Trinity- Logic, Emotion, and Wisdom

The human mind can be understood as having two primary systems the “logical”, which thinks with reason and analysis, and the “emotional” which feels with instinct and passion. Between them lies the “balanced mind”, a unifying bridge that integrates both logic and emotion, guiding us toward balanced decisions and deeper understanding.

Logical mind

The logical mind, primarily associated with the prefrontal cortex, is where reason and reflection come alive. It guides us in problem-solving, planning, self-regulation, supports empathy, contemplation of purpose and making decisions grounded in facts and foresight. It is the part of ourselves that thinks critically, exercises self-control, and honors moral and spiritual values. From a deeper, spiritual perspective, the logical mind serves as a channel for divine guidance where clarity, patience, and wisdom converge to align our choices with higher principles, illuminating a path of thoughtful, purposeful living.

The Arabic term ‘aql (intellect) refers to the human faculty of reason and thoughtful discernment . Unlike animals that operate primarily through instinct, the human mind is honored with the ability to pause, reflect, and choose with wisdom and responsibility.

Modern neuroscience tells us that the logical mind, centered in the prefrontal cortex took millions of years to evolve. Slowly, primitive humans developed the capacity to plan, solve problems, and make decisions. This slow biological evolution gave rise to what we now call “logic” or rational thinking. However, Islam presents a deeper view: the ability to reason is not merely the outcome of brain matter developing over time; it is a divine gift bestowed upon humans from the moment they were brought into existence.

“And He taught Adam the names of all things.” —Surah Al-Baqarah (2:31)

In the Qur’an, Allah(SWT) repeatedly invites human beings to think, reflect, observe, reason, and use their intellect purposefully.

- Surah Al- Imran (3:190) : “Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, are signs for those who possess understanding.”
- Surah An- Nahl(16:12) :“ And He has subjected to you the night and the day, the sun and the moon; and the stars are subjected to his command. Surely, in these are proofs for people who understand .”
- Surah Ar- Rum (30:21) :“And of His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find tranquility in them; And He has placed between you affection and mercy. Surely in this are signs for people who reflect”.
- Surah Al-Ghashiyah (88:17–20) :“Then do they not look at the camels, how they are created? And at the sky, how it is raised? And at the mountains, how they are erected? And at the earth , how it is spread out?”

- Surah Al-Baqarah (2:73) : “So, We said, “Strike the slain man with part of it.” Thus does Allah bring the dead to life, and He shows you His signs that you might reason.
- Surah Al-Mu’minun (23:80): “And He is the One Who gives life and causes death, and to Him belongs the alternation of the day and night. Will you not then understand?”
- Surah Sa’ad (38:29) : “(This is) a blessed Book We have revealed to you(O Muhammad), that they may reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.”
- Surah Yunus (10:24) : “The example of [this] worldly life is but like rain which We have sent down from the sky that the plants of the earth absorb – [those] from which men and livestock eat – until, when the earth has taken on its adornment and is beautified and its people suppose that they have capability over it, there comes to it Our command by night or by day, and We make it as a harvest, as if it had not flourished yesterday. Thus do We explain in detail the signs for a people who give thought.”

From the mercy of Allah (SWT) is that He does not hold a person accountable unless they possess the mental clarity to understand right from wrong. The Prophet(S.A.W) mentioned this principle in the following Hadith:

“The Pen has been lifted from three: from the sleeper until he wakes, from the child until he reaches puberty, and from the insane until he regains sanity.”- Sunan Abi Dawud.

Evidence from Hadith – Emphasis on Reason Over Emotion :

The Prophet Muhammad(SAW) said:

"The strong person is not the one who overcomes others by force, but the one who controls himself when angry." (Sahih al-Bukhari)

This hadith highlights emotional regulation, which is a sign of strength and maturity.

Emotional mind

The emotional mind, largely governed by the limbic system, especially the amygdala and hippocampus, processes emotions like fear, anger, love, and desire. It reacts quickly, often before the logical mind has a chance to evaluate a situation. Yet emotions are not random or mere chemical reactions; they are tests, tools, and signs from Allah (SWT), guiding humans toward understanding, reflection, and spiritual growth.

From the earliest stages of fetal development, the heart is formed even before the brain. While science identifies the brain as the primary processor of thoughts and emotions, it also acknowledges that the heart and brain are deeply interconnected through powerful neuro-physiological pathways. Scientifically, emotions and perceptions are processed through the brain's emotional and logical systems, yet these processes remain closely linked to the heart through continuous physiological feedback.

Psychologically, the emotional mind influences the rhythm of the heart, and in turn, the state of the heart affects the clarity and stability of emotional responses. Islamically, the Qur'an describes the heart as the center of understanding, sincerity, and spiritual perception, indicating that the heart governs the truthfulness and intention behind the decisions made by both the emotional and logical faculties. Thus, the heart stands at the intersection of biological function, psychological experience, and spiritual insight.

Scholars explain that the heart is the locus where guidance settles, where inner clarity is born, and where truth finds its home. The Qur'an reminds us of this profound connection: *"They have hearts with which they do not understand"* — Surah Al-A'raf (7:179), linking emotional awareness directly to comprehension and spiritual perception.

Similarly, Allah (SWT) says:

"Have they not travelled through the earth and have hearts by which to reason and ears by which to hear? For indeed, it is not the eyes that are blinded, but blinded are the hearts which are within the breasts." — Surah Al-Hajj (22:46)

Here, the heart is not presented merely as an emotional organ, but as the centre of understanding, discernment, and spiritual awareness, the place where truth is recognised, guidance is received, and perception is purified.

Emotion: A Divine Faculty to Connect

"Those who believe and whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Surely in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest". — Surah Ar-Ra'd (13:28).

Islam teaches that emotional regulation is a divine faculty, cultivated through Sabr (patience), Tawakkul (trust in Allah), and Zikr (remembrance of Allah) — three foundational regulative forces that steady the human heart and guide it toward clarity.

When the emotional mind becomes overactive, such as in moments of anger, fear, or distress, the prefrontal cortex may temporarily lose control, leading to impulsive or harmful actions. Modern neuroscience mirrors this spiritual teaching: unchecked emotional impulses, if left

unguided, can resemble the whisperings of Shaytan, pulling a person away from clarity, wisdom, and self-control.

“From the evil of the whisperer(devil who whispers evil in the hearts of men) who withdraws(from his whispering in one’s heart after one remembers Allah), Who whispers(evil) into the breasts(chest) of mankind.” —Surah An-Nas (114:4–5)

The Qur’an emphasizes resisting such impulses through self-discipline, mindfulness, remembrance of Allah(SWT), and patience, strengthening both emotional and spiritual resilience.

A balanced individual integrates both the emotional mind and the logical mind. When anger arises, the emotional mind may urge an immediate reaction, but the logical mind reminds one to pause, reflect, and respond wisely. This harmony not only supports sound decision-making, but also nurtures spiritual growth, emotional maturity, and authentic attunement with others.

The Eternal Conflict: You Are the Judge

Within every human being lies an ongoing struggle between the emotional mind and the logical mind. You are not defined by either one—you are the judge between them. Every moment presents a choice: which voice will you follow? This inner tension mirrors the spiritual pull between the whispers of Shaytan and the guidance of Allah (SWT). The Qur’an describes the heart as the place where this struggle is resolved. Through faith, patience, and the remembrance of Allah (SWT), a person can rise above impulsive desires and choose the righteous, elevated path.

On one side lies the logical mind, shaped by the prefrontal cortex, responsible for reasoning, reflection, analysis, and deliberate decision-making. On the other sits the emotional mind, rooted in the limbic system with the amygdala at its core, driving instinctive reactions such as fear, love, and anger.

If the emotional mind becomes too strong, a person becomes impulsive, reactive, and easily overwhelmed by desire, fear, anger, or sensitivity.

If the logical mind becomes too strong, a person becomes emotionally disconnected, rigid, cold, and unable to empathize or build meaningful relationships.

True growth does not come from empowering one side and weakening the other, but from cultivating balance between them. A balanced mind integrates both—thinking with clarity while feeling with sincerity—allowing the heart to guide choices with wisdom, compassion, and truth.

The Path to Spiritual Mastery

Overcoming the satanic impulses and nurturing the spiritual self requires conscious effort and discipline.

- **Self-awareness:** Recognizing one's thoughts and actions is the first step toward transformation. Spending time with oneself gives deeper reflection into actions, intentions, impulses, strength and weaknesses of inner self.
- **Prayer :** Regular spiritual practices strengthen connection with the divine and silence negative impulses.
- **Kindness:** Acts of kindness cultivate empathy and shift focus from self-centeredness to the well-being

of others. Studies have found that acts of kindness are linked to increased feelings of well-being.

- **Discipline Your thoughts :** Imagine a negative thought like, “I always mess up things ” Instead of letting it grow, you pause, take a deep breath, and ask yourself, “Is this specific to only some situations, or am I generalizing it to every situation ?” You then replace it with a balanced thought like, “I am working on it, and I’ll improve every single day”. Another example is when you notice yourself expecting everyone to understand or agree with you. Instead of spiraling, you gently remind yourself, “It’s okay. Not everyone has to understand me, and that does not diminish my worth.”

This simple act of noticing, labeling, and replacing unhelpful thoughts is how you begin disciplining your mind—shifting from emotional reactivity to grounded clarity.

- **Forgiveness:** Acknowledging one’s mistakes, seeking forgiveness & forgiving others help cleanse the heart and mind. Over the last two decades, the association between forgiveness and mental health problems has drawn more and more attention. Human nature has the ability to make good or bad, help or hurt, and to forgive or take revenge. True forgiveness is voluntary, an active process, and a behavior chosen intentionally.

People with low self-esteem often struggle to both ask for forgiveness and offer it to others. This is because their inner self-worth feels too fragile to admit mistakes or extend grace. They may see apologizing as humiliation, not humility. Likewise, forgiving others might feel like letting go of control or allowing disrespect. That is the reason why

building healthy self-esteem is essential, when you value yourself, you're not threatened by vulnerability. You can say 'I'm sorry' without crumbling, and you can say 'I forgive you' without feeling weak. High self-esteem creates the emotional safety needed for real healing and connection.

Divine Design – Male and Female Brain Differences

“And of all things We created two mates, that you may reflect.” — *Surah Adh-Dhariyat (51:49) The principle of pairing as a divine design.*

Allah (SWT), in His infinite wisdom, has created men and women with unique roles, abilities, and temperaments. These differences are complementary strengths, designed to create balance and harmony in society and the home. From the way our minds process emotions and reason to how we respond to challenges, men and women display tendencies that reflect purposeful divine design.

The Woman's brain: Nurturing by Nature

So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence of what Allah would have them guard... — *Surah An-Nisa (4:34)*

“And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their chastity...” — *Surah An-Nur (24:31)*

A woman's brain is exquisitely attuned to empathy, nurturing, modesty and emotional connection. She can perceive emotions deeply, respond with compassion, and offer unconditional love, particularly to her children and family. Research in neuroscience reveals that women generally exhibit stronger interhemispheric connectivity, enabling them to integrate emotion and intuition more fluidly.

This natural design shapes her role in raising children, fostering warmth at home, and supporting loved ones. Her intuition, patience, and attentiveness are hallmarks of her emotional intelligence, qualities vital not only in caregiving but also in building meaningful, lasting relationships.

The Man's Brain: Logic, Focus, and Resilience

A man's brain is particularly designed for analytical thinking, problem-solving, and emotional regulation. While men also experience depth of feeling, their tendencies often favor logic over emotion.

Research in neuroscience indicates that men generally exhibit stronger intrahemispheric connectivity, which supports focused thinking, spatial reasoning, and rapid decision-making—traits essential for navigating complex external challenges.

This neural pattern allows them to focus on their duties, providing for the family, and managing external challenge without becoming emotionally overwhelmed. Allah (SWT) has equipped them with the emotional strength and detachment needed to maintain composure under pressure.

Had men been as emotionally sensitive as women, they might struggle with the hardships and demands of earning a livelihood; facing the outside world, and dealing with daily pressures. Hence, Allah(SWT) equipped them with the emotional strength and detachment necessary to remain focused and steadfast.

“Men are in charge of women by[right] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend[for maintenance] from their wealth...” — Surah An-Nisa (4:34)

A perfect compliment – unity through differences

These differences are not meant to divide men and women but to unite them. Where women provide emotional warmth and nurturing, men contribute to structure, protection and provision. Where one nurtures the heart, the other strengthens the foundation. Together, they form a balanced partnership, that reflects Almighty Allah's perfect wisdom in creation.

The interplay of complementary strengths within family and society demonstrates how the divine design harmonizes logic, emotion, and purpose to create a complete and Balanced human experience

CHAPTER 3

The Essence and Evolution of Personality

Understanding Personality: An Islamic and Psychological Perspective

Personality is a complex and multifaceted aspect of human existence, representing the patterns of thoughts, emotions, behaviours, and values that define an individual's unique way of interacting with the world. It is shaped by a dynamic interplay of inborn temperamental tendencies, life experiences, and conscious choices.

Personality is not a fixed or rigid identity; rather, it is flexible, adaptive, and responsive to context, roles, and environments. It is like a gem with many facets, reflecting different colours depending on the angle of light. For example, a person may appear soft-spoken, cooperative, and accommodating in the workplace. However, the same person may display a dominant, assertive, and controlling style at home. This shows that personality expresses itself differently depending on context, roles, expectations, and emotional comfort levels. Well w

Islam presents a balanced and profound view of human nature. The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) once told Al-Ashajj 'Abd al-Qays that he possessed two qualities beloved to Allah, tolerant and calm deliberation(calculative and careful in making decisions), When Al-Ashajj asked whether these traits were something he had learned or

something he was created with, the Prophet Muhammad(SAW) replied that Allah created him with them, affirming that certain dispositions are inborn.

Alongside this, other authentic teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) show that character can also be developed and strengthened through effort. Narrated Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri (RA): Some people from the Ansar asked the Messenger of Allah (SAW) and he gave them, then they asked him again and he gave them, until all that was with him was finished. Then he said; “Whoever abstains from asking others, Allah will make him self-sufficient; whoever tries to make himself independent, Allah will make him self-sufficient; and whoever remains patient, Allah will grant him patience. No one has been given a gift better and greater than patience.” (Sahih- al- Bukhari)

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW), emphasized that human character can be cultivated through effort and intention. He stated that “knowledge is gained by learning, and forbearance by practicing forbearance” (authentic, Al-Tabarani), highlighting that moral qualities are developed through conscious practice. He also taught that “actions are only by intentions” (Sahih al- Bukhari), showing that sincere, repeated effort shapes one’s inner character and determines the spiritual value of deeds.

These teachings reveal that humans are born with certain temperamental tendencies, which form the foundational blueprint of personality, yet these tendencies can be refined, strengthened, or reshaped through conscious effort, discipline, and practice.

These teachings collectively show that Islam acknowledged the roles of both nature and nurture in shaping a person’s personality. Remarkably, Islam

articulated this balance over 1,400 years ago—long before modern psychology introduced the “nature versus nurture” concept in the late 19th century.

Modern psychology similarly emphasizes the interaction of both nature and nurture . Research in developmental psychology shows that every child enters the world with distinct temperamental traits—biologically based patterns of emotional reactivity, sensitivity, and self-regulation. For example, some infants are naturally more sensitive or fearful, they may cry at minor sounds, react strongly to unfamiliar situations, or show a rapid heartbeat when startled. As the child grows, the environment - family interactions, emotional atmosphere, caregiving styles, and role models can strengthen, reshape, or soften these inborn tendencies. A child who begins life as highly sensitive or fearful may gradually become more confident when raised in a warm, active, encouraging, and courageous home. Consistent experiences of safety and positive modeling help the child transform early fearfulness into adaptability and resilience. Research also indicates that by around three years of age, these early temperamental traits begin to stabilize into more recognizable personality tendencies, though they still remain open to change.

Psychologists describe personality as a dynamic combination of temperament, character, environment, and experiences. Temperament refers to biological and genetic aspects of how we respond to the world—such as being naturally calm or excitable. Character is shaped by values, moral beliefs, and life choices. Environment adds the influence of family, culture, and society, while experiences provide personal lessons and memories that mold growth. From a scientific standpoint, personality has been studied through various theories, each offering a lens to explain

why people are the way they are. Theories in psychology are systematic interpretations of human behaviour, thoughts, and emotions based on observation, research, and analysis. They are frameworks to understand complex psychological phenomena, not absolute facts, and are provisional—subject to testing, revision, and refinement.

For example, Freud's psychoanalytic theory interprets personality development in terms of unconscious drives and early childhood experiences. Behaviourist theories interpret behaviour as learned through reinforcement and conditioning. Trait theories interpret personality as a combination of stable characteristics or dimensions influencing behaviour across situations. While these theories differ in approach, each provides valuable insight into the ways temperament, character, environment, and experiences interact to shape a person's unique personality.

Evolution of Personality Theories

1. Psychoanalytic Theory (Freud, early 1900s) – emphasizes the role of unconscious desires, early childhood experiences, and internal conflicts in the development of personality.
2. Behavioral Theory (John B. Watson, B.F. Skinner, 1910-1950s) – Focuses on learned behaviours shaped by environment, rewards, and punishments in the formation of personality.
3. Humanistic Theory (Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers– 1950s-1960s) - emphasizes on personal growth, self-actualization, and the inherent goodness of people as key factors in the development of personality.
4. Trait theory (Allport- 1930s, Catell, Eysenck- 1940s- 1970s, Big Five – 1980s- 1990s) - Suggests

that personality can be broken down into specific, stable traits (e.g., the “Big Five” model: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism).

5. Social-Cognitive Theory (Albert Bandura, Mishel, 1960s-1990s) - emphasizes the dynamic interaction between personal factors, behaviours, and environment, a concept known as reciprocal determinism.
6. Biological Theory (strengthened from 1980s onward) – explores how genetic, neurological, and physiological factors influence and shape behaviour and personality.

Each theory provides valuable insight, but no single framework can fully capture the richness of human personality.

The Different Dimensions of Personality

Personality is a rich and flexible combination of traits that emerge differently in different contexts. Like a gem reflecting varied colours when viewed from different angles, our personality shows unique facets in each sphere of life.

1. Social Personality — Linked to the Interpersonal Domain

Our social personality comes alive when we engage with people—friends, acquaintances, or communities. It is expressed through how we communicate, build connections, share humor, and show empathy. This is closely tied to the interpersonal domain, which focuses on our ability to understand others, create trust, and maintain healthy relationships. A socially strong personality

enhances our interpersonal skills, and strong interpersonal skills make our social presence warmer and more effective.

2. Professional Personality — Linked to the Interpersonal Domain

The professional personality is the side of us that emerges in work, leadership, or any goal-oriented environment. It includes qualities such as discipline, problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability. Although it may seem separate from social personality, it is still deeply rooted in the interpersonal domain, because professional success often depends on how effectively we collaborate, communicate, and navigate relationships in formal settings.

3. Personal Personality — Linked to the Intrapersonal Domain

Our personal personality reflects the traits and values that we consciously choose to live by in daily life—our preferred lifestyle, moral code, habits, and self-expression. This is tied to the intrapersonal domain, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, and a sense of personal identity. It is how we present our inner values in a way that is visible to those closest to us.

4. Private Personality — Also Linked to the Intrapersonal Domain

While “personal personality” reflects the side we are willing to share with trusted people, our “private personality” is the side that remains entirely within us—our unspoken thoughts, secret desires, fears, struggles, and moments of self-dialogue. The private personality is often the most authentic and unfiltered version of ourselves, one that only Allah(SWT) truly knows. “Personal personality” is the “inner self” we share selectively; private personality

is the “hidden self” we keep to ourselves. Both fall under the intrapersonal domain but differ in their degree of visibility.

Thus, personality is not one identity but a collection of selves, shifting according to context while anchored in one’s core values.

True balance is not about being identical in every situation; it is about keeping our values consistent across contexts. Whether we are interacting socially, working professionally, or reflecting privately, the same inner character - rooted in honesty, kindness, and dignity, should flow through all.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) embodied this harmony - approachable in social life, wise and just in leadership, deeply self-aware in worship, and adaptable in changing circumstances.

Brain Regions Shaping Personality

1. Prefrontal Cortex (PFC) – Often called the “executive” of the brain, the PFC is responsible for decision-making, impulse control, planning, and social behavior. A well-developed PFC is linked to conscientiousness, emotional regulation, and foresight.

2. Amygdala – The emotional alarm system of the brain. High amygdala reactivity is associated with stronger emotional responses, sometimes linked to traits like neuroticism or high sensitivity.

3. Hippocampus – Plays a key role in memory formation and emotional learning. Our personal memories shape how we see ourselves and respond to the world, influencing traits like openness or emotional warmth.

4. Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC) – Involved in empathy, error detection, and emotional regulation. A highly active ACC often relates to cooperative, compassionate personalities.

5. Default Mode Network (DMN) – A network of interconnected brain areas active when we are reflecting, daydreaming, or thinking about ourselves and others. It shapes self-identity and introspection—core aspects of personality.

Genetics, Environment, and Plasticity

While heritability studies show that about 40–60% of personality traits can be linked to genetics, the brain's plasticity means experiences, learning, and even intentional practice can reshape neural pathways. For instance:

Meditation can strengthen the prefrontal cortex and reduce amygdala reactivity.

Positive social environments can boost oxytocin release, reinforcing trust and empathy.

Trauma can alter hippocampal function, influencing emotional memory and sensitivity.

Personality: Resilient and Evolving

Personality is more than a static trait and the mind that shapes it is neither fragile or fickle. It is a living, evolving construct, capable of remarkable adaptability. Just as muscles grow stronger with exercise, personality is refined through challenges, choices, and faith.

When a person goes through difficult times, the mind instinctively begins searching for adaptive tools, mental and emotional strategies to survive and thrive. such tools

serve as weapons of resilience, helping us navigate adversity. In this search, we often develop courage, patience, and inner strength that were previously dormant. Hardship has the power to mould us in ways comfort never can. The pressure of adversity can transform timidity into confidence, indecision into clarity, and vulnerability into strength. Through this process, the person changes, and so does the personality

Studies in neuroscience and psychology show that sustained behavioural changes can physically alter brain structure and connectivity. Personality lives in the brain, but it is sculpted by the mind. Your brain gives you the hardware, but your thoughts, habits, and environment rewrite the software.

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) demonstrated emotional mastery.

He said: "The strong man is not the one who can overpower people by his strength, but the strong man is the who controls himself while in anger" (Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim).

Authenticity and Self-Acceptance

To live a truly fulfilling life, psychology emphasizes the importance of authenticity, being honest with oneself, embracing one's identity, and aligning one's choices with inner values rather than yielding to external pressures. In today's globalized world, many feel compelled to conform to dominant cultural norms, often at the expense of their own authenticity. This can show up in various ways: adopting English fluency, altering personal style or mannerisms, modifying cultural practices or traditions, imitating social media trends, adopting foreign lifestyle, suppressing one's natural accent or reshaping personal

values to fit in. These pressures can subtly erode self-esteem, as individuals start to measure their worth by external approval rather than their true selves. Authenticity, the courage to embrace and express one's real identity is therefore deeply connected to healthy self-esteem and inner confidence.

While it's enriching to learn from other cultures, abandoning your own identity out of unreasonable embarrassment is a quiet form of self-rejection. Real confidence stems from owning who you are, not hiding it.

Authenticity and self-acceptance aren't loud, they're quietly powerful. When you embrace your language, culture, and identity without apology, you give others silent permission to do the same. You become a bridge between worlds, not someone lost between them.

Authenticity and Language:

Language is far more than a tool for communication. It carries our emotions, shapes our identity, and preserves the culture we belong to. Through Language, traditions are preserved, values are transmitted, and communities stay connected across generations.

English language is often the primary language of communication at school, at work, and in many social interactions making it undeniably important. Yet, while being bilingual matters, communicating in one's native language, particularly in personal or community settings, without guilt is equally essential.

Authenticity often begins with the ability to express oneself in the language that shaped one's earliest experiences and emotional world. Yet today, English has become so dominant that many children hesitate or even feel ashamed

to speak their mother tongue in personal or communal settings . The issue is not English itself, but the way it is often valued above one's native language. Discouraging children from speaking their native language can create feelings of shame and weaken their cultural pride. By contrast, when families honor and practice their mother tongue, they pass on pride, resilience, confidence, cultural continuity, identity and the authenticity of who they are.

A child's first language, especially in their early childhood years connects them to home, family, and heritage, nurturing belonging and grounding self-esteem. Learning in one's native language in early years of life strengthens memory, problem-solving, and critical thinking, and it forms the foundation upon which the other languages can be built.

A strong command of the mother tongue provides clarity of thought, confidence in communication, and a secure sense of self, which in turn supports learning additional languages more effective and meaningful.

Authenticity and Self - esteem

Self-esteem is not rooted in ego or arrogance; rather, it is a genuine form of self-love. It represents our internal sense of worth—the value we assign to ourselves and the degree to which we respect, accept, and believe in who we are. Self-esteem shapes how we view our abilities, how we cope with challenges, and how secure we feel in our identity, independent of others' approval. In psychology, it is considered a vital pillar of emotional health, shaped in early life through parenting, social interactions, emotional experiences, and the beliefs we absorb.

People with high self-esteem are balanced, resilient, and inwardly secure. Those with low self-esteem often struggle with fear of judgment, hypersensitivity, and defensiveness.

Signs of High Self-Esteem

Individuals with high self-esteem often come from environments where they experience secure attachment, consistent emotional validation, and supportive communication. They grow up learning that mistakes do not define their identity, allowing them to separate critique from self-worth. Over time, they develop a compassionate inner voice rather than a harsh or punitive one, and this pattern is frequently modeled by caregivers who themselves demonstrate balanced, high self-esteem.

High self-esteem often arises from positive early-life experiences or, alternatively, from intentional habits developed over time. Some of its key traits include:

- They are not overly concerned with showcasing their status, achievements, wealth, or social standing. They don't carry an air of superiority based on their knowledge, career, or background. Instead, they remain grounded and approachable, effortlessly blending in with different groups, including those with less recognition or fewer resources.
- They don't seek validation, praise, or attention from external sources. Their sense of worth comes from within. They feel complete without needing to be in the spotlight or constantly acknowledged by others.
- They don't find it difficult to say the word 'no' when necessary. They also understand that it is normal not to be liked by everyone, recognizing that people view

the world through perceptual lenses that differ from each other.

- They don't feel compelled to constantly fix others. Instead, they practice selective ignorance, a quiet mark of their inner grace. For example, when someone behaves poorly, those with healthy self-esteem often choose to let it go unless intervention is truly necessary.

Signs of Low Self-Esteem

Low Self-Esteem, on the other hand, often develops from experiences of conditional approval from parents (for example, you're only good if you get good grades"), repeated criticism or emotional neglect, being compared to others, facing rejection, experiencing extreme stress, witnessing frequent conflict between parents as partners , having parents with low self-esteem or lacking affirmative role models.

People with low self-esteem live with inner insecurity that spills into their reactions, relationships, and interpretations of the world. The more unpleasant experiences a person has had, the quicker they respond and the more intensely they react.

Low self-esteem is usually the result of difficult early life experiences or, in some cases, self-made patterns shaped over time. Here are some traits:

- Quick to argue or defend. They often feel attacked by even minor suggestions or feedback, taking things personally and reacting with emotional intensity.
- They often have people-pleasing tendencies, constantly trying to meet other's expectations and earn their approval. Their self-worth depends on

external validation – being liked, praised, or noticed by others, rather than stemming from an inner sense of value.

- They try to “fix” others constantly. Because they feel out of control within, they attempt to control situations and people around them often giving unsolicited advice, overexplaining, or moralizing unnecessarily.
- They show extreme humility and tend to be overly accepting, rarely voicing their opinion when necessary. For example, a team member notices a serious mistake in a group project that could harm the outcome. Out of extreme humility, and thinking that pointing it out might upset others or create conflict, they remain silent. Their avoidance, however well-intentioned, allows the problem to grow and potentially causes greater harm.
- They project their own lack. People who constantly taunt, nitpick, find faults, or gossip are often projecting their inner dissatisfaction onto others. Jealousy, envy, and harsh criticism usually reflect internal emptiness rather than genuine insight. In some cases, they may even go to extreme lengths, engaging in harmful or sinful behavior to hurt others.

Are We in One Self-Esteem State permanently ?

Self-esteem is not a fixed or permanent trait; it is a fluid aspect of our personality that shifts with our experiences, environments, and inner reflections. Even people who generally possess healthy self-esteem may experience moments of insecurity or self-doubt, while those who often struggle with unhealthy self-esteem can feel genuine boosts

of confidence when they are supported or experience success.

This natural rise and fall shows that self-esteem adapts as we navigate life's challenges and opportunities. What truly matters is cultivating self-awareness, resilience, and reflective habits so that we respond to situations with clarity rather than being defined by fleeting emotions.

The purpose of distinguishing between high and low self-esteem is not to label anyone as superior or inferior, but to better understand the emotional wounds and inner conflicts that shape a person's behaviour. By recognizing that we all fluctuate along this spectrum at different points in life, we are encouraged to meet others with compassion, appreciate the complexity of their experiences, and respond with deeper understanding rather than criticism.

CHAPTER 4

Parenting - A Conscious Perspective

“As parents, we cannot write the destiny of our children, but we can surely guide them how to live with what Creator has destined for them”.

Children are our legacy. They carry forward our values, dreams, and hopes. Every lesson we teach and every moment we nurture shapes the future in their hands. They are not just our tomorrow; they are the builders of a world we may never see, but a world we have the privilege to influence. Protect them, guide them, and recognize the immense potential within each child.

Becoming a parent is a great honour. Honour your children in the same way you would wish to be honoured. While it is natural to guide them, it is equally important to understand and respect their individuality and personality. Every child is a complete universe within themselves.

Parenting in this generation demands more awareness, balance, and emotional strength than ever before, because both children and their parents face challenges that are different from those of previous generations.

Today's children grow up surrounded by stimulation, expectations, and pressures that earlier generations never knew. Raising them now feels like navigating a world that moves too quickly, expects too much, and leaves too little

space for imagination and slow, natural growth. With unprecedented awareness, constant internet access, social media, and a flood of exposure at every stage, the modern child faces a unique set of emotional and cognitive challenges.

Online platforms overflowing with games, educational content, and skill-building activities silently set expectations for children to absorb more knowledge and skills than ever before. Many children have their own tablets, digital spaces, and virtual worlds that pull them into a pace far beyond what childhood once required. Expectations from society, screens, and even parents have quietly expanded. The emotional space children once had to simply grow, stumble, and learn is now stretched thin. In this fast, loud world, the once-gentle rhythms of childhood have become hurried footsteps. The tender art of parenting now demands more patience, more presence, and a conscious effort to slow life down so that children can breathe, feel, and simply be.

Although the early years of childhood are foundational, it is crucial to understand that this foundation is meant for emotional intelligence, not premature intellectual performance. Emotional intelligence grows through affection, warmth, cooperation, security, and happiness, forming the base on which future cognitive abilities later develop. Yet today, children are often pushed toward early intellectual performance, overstimulation, and perfectionism, despite the fact that young children naturally operate through imagination and emotional perception rather than logic.

These pressures continue to intensify as children grow, shaping their teenage years in ways previous generations rarely experienced. Adolescence is no longer a gradual

transition into maturity but a fast-paced race shaped by academic expectations, social comparison, and the constant exposure of their lives online. Teens navigate identity, emotions, and self-worth in a digital world where every choice can be judged, posted, or magnified within seconds. Parenting teenagers today requires deeper patience, stronger communication, and an understanding heart that sees beyond their reactions into the quiet battles they fight within, offering guidance and presence.

Parenting Styles: The Balance between Love and Discipline

There is no universal formula for perfect parenting. Every parent brings their own personality, beliefs, and experiences into the way they raise their children.

Every child is unique, and so is every parent. What truly matters is our continuous effort – striving to grow, to evolve, and to become better versions of **ourselves, while guiding our children to blossom into the best versions of who they are meant to be.**

What proves effective for one child may not necessarily work for another, just as one parenting style may suit a particular family but not another. For instance, while an authoritative approach might bring positive results in some households, it may not yield the same outcome elsewhere.

Over time, psychologists have identified a few main parenting styles that describe the patterns of behaviour parents commonly follow. Understanding these styles can help us reflect on our own approach and make conscious choices that nurture both love and discipline.

Different Parenting Styles-

1. Authoritative Parenting

This style is often considered the most balanced and effective. Authoritative parents are loving yet firm. They set clear boundaries, explain rules, and encourage open communication. They guide their children with empathy, consistency, and respect. Such children usually grow up to be confident, self-disciplined, and emotionally intelligent because they learn to understand why certain behaviours are right or wrong.

2. Authoritarian Parenting

Authoritarian parents are strict, controlling, and less emotionally responsive. They expect obedience and often enforce rules without explanation. Communication tends to flow one way, from parent to child. While this approach may produce short-term obedience, it often leads to fear, low self-esteem, and difficulty in decision-making, as children learn to follow rather than think.

3. Permissive Parenting

Permissive parents are loving but lenient. They are highly nurturing but place few demands or boundaries. They may avoid confrontation and allow children to make their own choices without much guidance. While this creates a warm relationship, it can result in a lack of discipline or responsibility, as the child may not learn limits or accountability.

4. Neglectful (Uninvolved) Parenting

Neglectful parents are detached or emotionally unavailable. They provide for a child's basic needs but are often unresponsive to emotional or behavioural needs. This lack of connection can make children feel insecure or neglected, often leading to behavioural or emotional struggles.

5. Adaptive or Flexible Parenting

Some parents use a combination of styles depending on the situation and the child's temperament. They adjust between firmness and warmth, between guidance and freedom. This flexibility helps parents respond wisely to their child's changing needs as they grow.

In reality, no parent fits perfectly into one style. Most of us blend different elements depending on our circumstances, stress levels, and children's personalities. The key is awareness, knowing when to be firm, when to be kind, and when to simply listen. Parenting is less about perfection and more about progress, love, and learning together.

Parenting : A Trust and a Test

Parenting is not just about effort and outcome, it is also a divine test. Allah(SWT) reminds us that He tests us through our children, our wealth, and the things most dear to us. Sometimes, even when parents fulfil their responsibility sincerely, the results may not appear as expected. This, too, is part of Allah's test and wisdom.

Perhaps the child's behaviour is a test of the parent's patience and faith. In the end, both parenting and the challenges that come with it are part of a sacred journey of growth, endurance, and trust in Allah's plan.

“Indeed, every minor and major effort of parents is rewarded. Nothing is left unseen by Allah (SWT)”.

First five years – the golden period

In the early years, a child’s brain forms over a million neural connections every second, with 90% of brain growth completed by age five. These experiences—positive or negative—shape brain development, influencing health, learning, and behaviour for life. While genetics play a role, the quality of family interactions, the home environment, and early learning opportunities are what truly build a strong foundation.

The first five years lay the groundwork not only for health but also for lifelong success, well-being, and emotional resilience. Even experienced parents discover that children don’t always meet expectations: a child who seems ordinary today may blossom tomorrow, while one who appears gifted early on may choose a simpler path later. The essence of parenting lies in continuing the journey with dedication—investing effort, nurturing intentions, trusting destiny, and never losing hope.

Motherhood – A Sacred Trust

Allah(SWT) granted great honour to a “mother” in Islam. He declared, “Paradise lies beneath the feet of the mother.” In this light, I wish to honour and recall the timeless example of the noble and virtuous mother Hajera(AS) When Ibrahim (AS) was commanded by Allah (SWT) to leave Hajera (AS) and her son Ismail (AS) in the barren valley, Allah(SWT) elevated that **valley** — Wadi-e-Hijr — to a place of deep spiritual importance.

Not only do pilgrims perform Tawaf around the Kaaba, the House of Allah, but they are also commanded to walk between the hills of Safa and Marwah — retracing the steps of Hajera (AS) as she ran in search of water for her child Ismail (AS). This act has been made a part of Hajj and Umrah forever, showing how Allah (SWT) honoured a mother's struggle and her tawakkul (complete trust) in Him.

Furthermore, the blessed water of Zamzam, which miraculously gushed forth from the earth at the feet of Ismail (AS), is a divine response to Hajera's (AS) pain and unwavering faith. Through this, Allah (SWT) showed us that while, He values tawakkul (complete trust), He also deeply acknowledges and uplifts a mother's emotional agony. Her patience, and tawakkul (complete trust) were transformed into eternal blessings.

A Mother's love and presence are irreplaceable and foundational, creating secure world where children feel safe, loved and empowered to flourish with the best within them.

Fatherhood – A Sacred Responsibility

Fatherhood holds a revered and exemplary place in Islam. A "father" is not only the provider and protector of his family, but also a spiritual guide whose sacrifices and shape the destiny of his children. A profound and exemplary model is the story of honourable Prophet Ibrahim (AS) and his son Ismail (AS) which forms the foundation of Eid al-Adha.

After many years of longing, Allah(SWT) blessed Ibrahim (AS) with Son Ismail (AS) When Ismail (AS) grew old enough to accompany his father, Ibrahim (AS) was

commanded by Allah(SWT) to sacrifice his beloved son for the sake of Allah(SWT).

The Qur'an narrates this moment:

“Then, when (the son) reached the age to work with him, he (Ibrahim) said, ‘O my dear son, I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice you, So see what you think.’ He (Ismail) said, ‘O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah(SWT) wills, among the steadfast.’”(As-Saffat 37:102)

Even the angels of the heavens wept at a father's agony as Ibrahim (AS)moved forward with obedience. At the last moment, Allah(SWT) replaced Ismail (AS)with a ram from Jannah, proclaiming:

“O Ibrahim! You have fulfilled the vision. Indeed, this is how We reward the good doers. That was a truly revealing test. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.” (As-Saffat 37:104–107)

This act of sacrifice shows us that fatherhood in Islam is not merely about providing food and shelter. It is also about:

- Guiding children towards faith and obedience to Allah.(SWT)
- Balancing deep love with responsibility and discipline
- Building trust and respect through open dialogue
- Leaving behind a legacy unwavering faith for generations to come

Our Prophet Muhammad (SAW) emphasized the father's place in a believer's life when he said:

“The father is the middle of the gates of Paradise, so keep to this gate or lose it.” (Jami ’at-Tirmidhi)

In another Hadith Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

“The pleasure of the Lord lies in the pleasure of the father, and the displeasure of the Lord lies in the displeasure of the father.” – Jami’ at -Tirmidhi

These teachings reflect that just as the mother’s feet lead to Paradise, the father too is a door to Paradise. Honouring, serving, and respecting both parents is therefore not only a duty but also a path to Almighty Allah’s pleasure.

Critical Aspects of Parenting

1. Home – The First School

Home is a child’s first school, and children learn mostly by watching what you do, not just by listening to your words. If your actions don’t match what you say, they may not follow your guidance.”

Parents are every child’s first teachers. The home environment shapes love, relationships, self-expression, responsibility, resilience, and values. In the formative years (0–7), children absorb everything like a sponge—every word, reaction, and gesture leaves a lasting impression. A strong emotional bond between parent and child is essential for effective guidance. True guidance flows through connection before correction.

Home is only the space where one can be their real selves—without the pressure to perform, hide their feelings, or pretend to be someone they’re not. When a home offers emotional security and genuine connection, it becomes the

foundation for a child's confidence, mental well-being, and healthy relationships in the future.

Before a child learns to write their name, they already understand what love feels like, what is their identity, what it means to belong, and how safe the world can be—based on how we make them feel at home.

Mind-full Vs Mindful home

A “mindful” home encourages presence—talking to one another without distractions, sharing meals together, pausing to reflect, and fostering calmness, connection, and awareness.

A “mind-full” home, on the other hand, is a buzzing space—with loud TV, fast-paced video games, constant use of gadgets and the urge to check phones every few minutes. This kind of environment can leave children overwhelmed, distracted, and disconnected.

In today's modern age, creating a “mindful environment” at home is more important than ever. For instance, when the dining table is filled with food and the whole family gathers to eat, take a moment to reflect and remind your children: this is not just a meal—it is a mercy and blessing from Allah (SWT). Teach them the example of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) and his blessed family, who at times endured intense hunger and hardship, yet their trust in Allah remained unshaken. Even in the harshest circumstances, their faith, patience, and reliance upon Allah never wavered.

Abu Talhah (RA) reported:

“We complained to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about hunger, and we lifted our garments to show him stones tied to our stomachs.

*Then the Messenger of Allah(S.A.W)lifted his garment and showed us **two stones** tied to his stomach.” Sunan al-Tirmidhi*

“We would look at the crescent, then another crescent, and then another crescent—three crescents in two months—and no fire was lit in the houses of the Messenger of Allah(S.A.W).”

It was said, “O ‘Ā’ishah, what did you live on?”

She replied, “*Dates and water.*”—*Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*.

Narrated by ‘Ā’ishah (RA):

“When the Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) passed away, there was nothing in my house that a living being could eat except a handful of barley. So, I ate of it for a long time and measures it, and (after a short period) it was consumed. ” — Sahih al-Bukhari

2. Imitation

Most importantly, children learn less from instruction and more from imitation. They observe how parents speak to one another, resolve conflicts, manage emotions, show gratitude, and practice faith. For example, if you teach a child gratitude or respect verbally, but your actions contradict your words, this incongruence prevents their mind from accepting the lesson. Children follow what they see, not just what they are told. These subtle lessons form a moral compass and emotional resilience that no school or technology can replace.

3. Repetition – A Rule of the Mind

Repetition is a powerful principle of the subconscious mind. Repetition is a fundamental rule of how the mind works. Our brain processes information in chunks and responds best when that information is repeated consistently over

time. This is especially true in parenting. Children may not immediately follow instructions or show understanding after hearing something twice or thrice. You may feel frustrated, wondering why they're not listening. But in reality, they are absorbing more than they show. Parenting doesn't yield instant results. It takes time, patience, and persistence. Over time, the lessons take root, becoming visible in a child's actions.

In parenting, repetition isn't just about reminding—it's about reinforcing. With time, repeated guidance shapes a child's habits, behavior, and thinking in a lasting way. Just as we pray five times a day—not because Allah(SWT) needs it, but because we need constant reminders to stay connected, to fear and love Allah(SWT), and to remain on the right path- repetition cultivates mindfulness, discipline, and growth in children.

“Raising a Good Man: Beyond Career and Earnings”

During the growing years, children often hear repetitive dialogues from parents, one of the most common for a male child is “ what career will you choose when you grow up? As parents, we often focus on what career our son would choose or how much he would earn & constantly talk about it during his growing years. While earning for a living is important for a man, it is also a natural instinct—the Creator has already placed in him the drive to work for his family's welfare and provide for their needs. What is rare, however, is hearing a parent say they want their son to grow into a good father, a loving husband, a supportive friend, and above all, a kind and good human being. Even though we wish for all these qualities in our children and we work towards it, we often don't express them openly in words as we do for their academics. As a result, the focus remains on material success as we openly express it in our

words, while the deeper values that shape true character are left unspoken.

4. The stigma around free time

When a child spends time playing, exploring their environment, engaging with family and friends or daydreaming, we often think they're wasting their valuable time and not studying. But they're actually not. Free time is also important for their psychological & physiological health & well-being.

A child's EQ, IQ and cognitive abilities can be significantly influenced and developed during their free time, especially when they engage in meaningful activities. Children also learn effectively through social interaction - play, conversation, or collaboration. These interactions teach critical skills such as communication, empathy, and teamwork.

Equally important is the value of silence: simply being still, enjoying quiet moments. Making a child's solitude meaningful helps nurture self-awareness, focus and emotional growth.

EQ(Emotional Quotient) before IQ(Intelligent Quotient)

Emotional intelligence develops before cognitive intelligence, creating the groundwork on which IQ later grows. EQ starts forming very early in life, long before academic learning begins. At its core, emotional intelligence is the capacity to understand, express, and regulate emotions. Neurologically, the limbic system, which governs emotional processing matures earlier than the brain regions involved in logical thinking(associated

with IQ). As a result, young children naturally internalize emotional responses and patterns long before they encounter structured learning (academic). These early emotional capacities shape the foundations of a balanced, confident, and resilient personality.

5. Understanding Emotions vs. Behaviours

Every human being, experiences wide spectrum of emotions such as sadness, excitement, love, guilt hatred, fear, and many more. They are natural emotional responses to internal or external stimuli. When a child feels angry because their toy was taken away, or feels jealous when a parent gives more attention to a sibling, these emotions are completely valid and should not be dismissed, or shamed..

However, how a child chooses to act on their feelings, through behaviours such as yelling, hitting, withdrawing, or hurting someone is a matter of conduct, and every behaviour carries consequences. , emotionally intelligent parenting encourages statements like:

“It's okay to feel angry, but it's not okay to hit.”

Such language sends a powerful message: You are allowed to feel, but you are also responsible for how you behave.

Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is the ability to manage and respond to emotions in a balanced, constructive manner. It doesn't mean suppressing feelings or pretending not to feel them. Instead it involves recognizing emotions as they arise, understanding their source, and choosing how to express them appropriately.

For children, this skill develops gradually through supportive relationships and consistent guidance.

Example:

A five-year-old boy once slipped into a swimming pool without knowing how to swim. Although quickly rescued, the experience left an emotional mark. After returning from vacation, he repeatedly drew pictures of himself underwater. When his mother gently asked him to talk about the drawings, he opened up and described what he had felt. Through this simple creative act, he was able to process fear and regain a sense of safety, showing how art can become a meaningful form of emotional healing for children.

Strong emotional regulation does not eliminate intense emotions; Instead, it empowers us to with the strength to face them without being overwhelmed.

face them without being overwhelmed. It forms the foundation of resilience, healthy relationships , and life-long mental well-being.

The ill effects of Suppressing Emotions –

Too often, traditional parenting encourages children to suppress what they feel. Common phrases like *“Boys don’t cry”* or *“Stop being so sensitive”* may seem harmless, but they send a powerful message, that emotions are something to be ashamed of or hidden. Over time, this not only prevents children from expressing themselves honestly but can also lead to bottled-up stress, poor emotional regulation and difficulty forming healthy relationships in long term.

The Fragile Mindset: Rising Emotionally Sensitivity in Youth

In recent times, there has been a notable shift in how children and adolescents respond to stress, criticism, and emotional discomfort.. Research suggests that today's youth tend to experience higher emotional sensitivity compared to past generations. Many parents and educators observe that even mild correction can trigger withdrawal and anxiety in today's youth, a response rarely seen in previous generations.

Today's children under five often show heightened emotional and behavioral challenges. They may struggle more with regulating emotions, experiencing frequent tantrums or intense frustration over minor setbacks. Separation anxiety and clinginess appear more pronounced, and attention spans are often shorter, sometimes influenced by early exposure to screens. Behavioural difficulties, such as defiance or impulsive aggression, are also more commonly observed. These patterns suggest that modern environmental, cultural, and parenting shifts are shaping a generation of young children who navigate a more emotionally complex early childhood than their predecessors.

Studies have found that when adolescents are exposed to parental criticism, their mood worsens and ruminative thoughts increase. In one experimental study, hearing parental-criticism-like statements significantly raised mood disturbance and ruminative thinking in 14- to 17-year-old adolescents; the strength of that effect varied depending on how the youth viewed themselves. Other longitudinal and systematic reviews have shown that parenting behaviours marked by criticism, rejection, or

control as opposed to warmth and support are associated with elevated rumination and internalizing problems (like anxiety or depression) in adolescents over time.

Natural developmental shifts during adolescence also heighten emotional intensity, making young people more reactive to challenges. However, this does not mean all youth are emotionally fragile, many remain resilient and able to cope effectively. A significant portion of today's generation is navigating a more emotionally complex landscape than previous generations.

This emotional sensitivity of today's youth, often surprises those from earlier generations, who experienced stricter, even physically punitive upbringings, yet claim to have emerged emotionally tougher. Why does this paradox exist?

Below are some key psychological, environmental, and cultural shifts that help explain this-

1. Overprotective Parenting

This form of Parenting often shields children from experiencing discomfort. It frequently involves smoothing every path, fixing every failure, and protecting children from unpleasant experiences. While well-intentioned, this creates emotional unpreparedness. Later in life, when faced with academic, personal or professional setbacks, such a child may crumble under pressure, seeking external support because they were never given the chance to build resilience and independence through small struggles.

2. Working mothers

Mothers play a vital role in the emotional and social development of their children, serving as primary

caregivers, role models, and sources of security. In today's modern era, many mothers face the challenge of balancing professional responsibilities with personal and family life, often relying on nannies, relatives, or other caregivers to assist in daily childcare. While such support can be valuable, nothing can truly replace the unique bond and influence of a mother in shaping a **child's emotional** resilience, attachment, and sense of security. Research indicates that when maternal time and attention are constrained due to work demands, children particularly those under five years, may experience reduced emotional responsiveness and early stress regulation, which can contribute to heightened sensitivity or emotional fragility later in life. Nevertheless, when working mothers maintain warmth, consistency, and emotional availability within the family, children are able to thrive, demonstrating that the quality of maternal interaction is far more critical than the quantity of time spent.

Mothers play a vital role in the emotional and social development of their children, serving as primary caregivers, role models, and sources of security. In today's modern era, many mothers face the challenge of balancing professional responsibilities with personal and family life, often relying on nannies, relatives, or other caregivers to assist in daily childcare. While such support can be valuable, nothing can truly replace the unique bond and influence of a mother in shaping a child's emotional resilience, attachment, and sense of security.

The first seven years of a child's life, especially the earliest five, are a critical period for spiritual, psychological, and physiological development. During this time, a child relies heavily on the mother's presence, guidance, and emotional support to develop secure attachment, emotional

regulation, and a sense of trust in the world. Even beyond the age of seven, maternal care remains essential for nurturing confidence, moral understanding, and social skills. Excessive absence due to long working hours and endless commitments at work place can create gaps in parenting, leaving emotional or developmental voids that are difficult or even impossible to fully repair in later years of child's life.

While women pursuing their careers and passions is both valuable and empowering, the key lies in balancing professional commitments with meaningful presence at home. It is also important to recognize that women naturally experience career gaps, for example, during marriage, pregnancy, and the maternity period and they often have opportunities to restart or advance their careers later. However, motherhood cannot be postponed. Once the childhood years pass, the foundational years are lost forever.

While careers can be continued in various forms—sometimes partially at 50%, 60%, or 70%, and at times even reduced to 40%, Careers naturally fluctuate; they may dip during the early years of a child's life and rise again as the child grows. These ups and downs are normal and manageable.

Mothers are human, with their own strengths and limitations, and it is not always possible to give 100% both at work and at home. Taking gradual steps towards professional life is perfectly understandable; there is no reason to feel guilty, nor does it diminish a woman's empowerment. Prioritizing motherhood while balancing professional aspirations thoughtfully ensures both the child's well-being and the mother's fulfilment over the long term.

2. Digital Exposure & Emotional Isolation

Social media connects today's youth to the world, yet distances them from the normalcy of life's moment-to-moment experiences. Online, they constantly compare themselves to curated images of others. While these images appear perfect, they are often an illusion, creating heightened insecurity and fostering a constant need for external validation. Even a harsh comment, whether online or in real life, can feel magnified, making ordinary social interactions more challenging.

Family time has become a challenge than ever in this electronic era, especially for children's mental, emotional, and social development. While technology offers many benefits, excessive screen time can lead to issues like decreased attention span, poor social skills, and weaker family bonds. Family time is about meaningful interaction, not merely physical proximity while distracted by screens. Simply sitting together while everyone is absorbed in phones, TVs, or tablets doesn't foster real connection, communication or bonding.

Screens have altered the pathways of emotional regulation, often leading to isolation by replacing human presence with digital interaction. In earlier times, when a father left for work, a child might cry, and the mother would soothe them through stories, play, or comforting words. The child's sadness was acknowledged, expressed, and processed through human connection. Today, that same child may be handed a phone or an entertainment video instead. The sadness isn't expressed or soothed—it is simply silenced. Over time, the child learns to rely on external, often unhealthy, stimuli to numb emotions rather than developing inner strength or using human connection to process feelings.

Fast-paced digital content conditions children's brains to expect constant stimulation. The nervous system remains in a state of alertness, and even minor discomforts, a simple "no," a disagreement, or a moment of boredom can trigger tension. The brain, trained to seek novelty and noise in the present time, begins to treat silence and stillness as problems, gradually altering its natural chemistry.

Boredom, is often seen as something that must be immediately filled with. . Though children may feel bored without their favourite Tv shows or games, it's not healthy to constantly entertain the mind. In fact, experiencing boredom is healthy. In today's fast-paced world, boredom has become rare, yet it's important to embrace it. Teach your child to normalize the "boredom zone." The next time they say, "I'm bored," remind them, it's actually a good thing. Boredom strengthens the brain, fosters creativity, encourages individuality, and nurtures mindfulness.

3.Lack of physical movement

Previous generations engaged in far more physical activity as part of their daily lives : Physical labor, and limited resources.

Today's generation enjoy more comfort but fewer opportunities for physical movement. With the rise of modern convenience services—such as food delivery, online shopping, and app-based assistance—effort has often been replaced by instant access. Children today spend much less time engaging in physical movement, whether through walking, outdoor play, or managing daily tasks. Entertainment, digital leisure, with tap-of-a-screen solutions have largely replaced natural activity, reducing the amount of physical exertion in daily life.

Cognitive-behavioural theory highlights that how we act influences how we feel and think. Reduced physical movement not only affects the body but can also impact mental and emotional well-being. The fewer opportunities children and adolescents have for active engagement, the more their development of resilience, strength, and healthy habits are restricted.

4. The over - labelled generation

Today's youth are growing up in a time where the language of trauma, abuse, depression, anxiety, emotional neglect, toxicity, and psychological harm is widely known and frequently used.

With the increasing dependency on social media platforms, this trend is no longer limited to children—youth, adults, and even parents are deeply influenced by the constant flow of exaggerated narratives. These platforms often magnify minor childhood issues, presenting normal behaviours as red flags and ordinary struggles as signs of serious problems. As this information spreads quickly, many parents begin to self-doubt their instincts, becoming more fearful, overly conscious, and uncertain about their parenting decisions.

While understanding these concepts is important for mental well-being, it has blurred the line between ordinary childhood and adolescence challenges and genuinely serious issues.

With increased awareness of these terms, many children are becoming less equipped to develop distress tolerance—the ability to endure discomfort with patience and inner strength. When minor setbacks are repeatedly described with heavy labels, the mind begins to interpret even small

difficulties through an exaggerated lens. Yet the human mind, created by Almighty Allah, is not fragile by nature; Allah has endowed it with resilience, designed to withstand and recover from ordinary stress. It is often the habit of magnifying and mislabelling minor struggles that makes today's youth more emotionally sensitive than they truly need to be.

The pervasive influence of social media plays a key role in amplifying the issue. These platforms often exaggerate minor childhood problems, presenting normal behaviours as alarming and ordinary struggles as serious concerns. As this content spreads rapidly, not only children but also parents and adults begin to self-doubt, becoming more anxious, overly cautious, and uncertain in their decisions. If parents themselves feel fragile or sensitive in their parenting choices, how can they confidently guide and support their children? How can they help their children develop strength if they themselves are insecure?

Our subconscious minds are deeply interconnected, often perceiving the emotions and mental states of others without a single word being spoken.

For example, in a home where parents consistently demonstrate strength, resilience, and calm, children often mirror these qualities, even without explicit instruction. Conversely, heightened parental anxiety or sensitivity can subtly increase a child's own emotional sensitivity. This suggests that some of the over-sensitivity observed in children today may, in part, reflect the emotional patterns of their parents, creating a ripple effect through the family environment.

5. Absence of Faith Anchoring

In many traditional societies, faith gave children an anchor: a belief that hardships had meaning, that patience would be rewarded, and that not everything was within their control. With growing secularism and spiritual disconnection, many young people today lack the inner grounding that once helped earlier generations endure criticism, failure, or uncertainty.

The sensitivity of today's youth is not merely a sign of weakness; it is a byproduct of cultural evolution, emotional shifts, and environmental influences.

CHAPTER 5

Career & Carrier

*“Recite in the name of your Lord who created.
Created man from a clinging substance.
Read, and your Lord is the most Generous,
Who taught by the pen,
Taught man that which he knew not.”*
— Surah Al-‘Alaq (96:1–5)

Rethinking Literacy and Illiteracy –

Education is often narrowly defined by academic achievements. Those who attain them are called “literate,” while those without formal schooling are easily dismissed as “illiterate.” Yet true literacy goes far beyond certificates on paper. Literacy is not just the ability to read books, it is also the ability to read life

Literacy is reflected in how we perceive situations, treat others, manage conflict, and carry ourselves with integrity. A degree might measure knowledge, but mind-set measures understanding. In this sense, many without degrees may live far more “literate” lives than those who have studied extensively yet failed to cultivate true literacy.

A person may never attend school, yet life itself is their greatest teacher. Through spiritual insight, social awareness, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and lived experience, they gain a wisdom no classroom can offer. They may never sit for an exam, but they

demonstrate literacy through resilience, empathy, manners, and behaviour.

Conversely, someone may graduate from prestigious schools, earn multiple degrees, and collect qualifications, yet still struggle to manage emotions, sustain relationships, or show resilience in times of hardship.

So the next time you hear of someone's degree, don't rush to call them "literate." And when you meet someone without formal schooling, don't assume they are "illiterate." True literacy is revealed not just by certificates, but by character, understanding, and the way one lives.

Education may guide you to a profession, but literacy teaches you how to live. Degrees can open doors, but emotional and moral intelligence shows you how to walk through them.

Idle Vs Ideal Education system

What is the first thought that comes to mind when you think of a school? For many, it is exams, curriculum, competition, tough subjects, punishments, assignments, and academic . Yet ideal education goes far beyond the scripted scope of academics. While academic learning is important, it is only one aspect of education, and on its own, it cannot ensure the holistic growth of a child.

Idle Education System

- Focuses only on rote learning, memorization, and exams.
- Measures all students by a single, standard, regardless of individual strengths or abilities.

- Labels students as “good” or “weak” based solely on exam performance.
- Neglects creativity, critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and life skills.
- Creates pressure, and fear of failure rather than curiosity or love for learning.

Ideal Education System

- Encourages curiosity, creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking.
- Recognizes and nurtures individual strengths, aptitudes, and learning styles.
- Builds character, resilience, emotional awareness, and social skills alongside academics.
- Supports holistic growth: mind and body
- Inspires a love for lifelong learning rather than fear of failure

The Animal School Allegory: Rethinking Standardized Education- George Reavis

In The Animal School, a group of animals decide to organize a “school” for all of them and they adopt a curriculum that includes skills like running, climbing, swimming, and flying. Then, in the name of fairness and standardization, every animal is required to take all subjects, regardless of their natural talents or physical make-up. As the classes proceed:

The duck, naturally excellent at swimming, struggles in running. To meet the standard, he drops swimming to focus on running, damaging his webbed feet eventually, his swimming ability degrades to average.

The rabbit, good at running, is forced to take swimming classes but can't swim well, suffers mentally, and ends up breaking down.

The squirrel, good climber, is made to take flying (ground-up flying lessons), which is unnatural for him, he burns out physically and performs poorly overall.

Meanwhile, an “abnormal” eel, who is mediocre at everything (swimming, running, climbing, flying), ends up with the “highest average” by being passable in all, and becomes valedictorian.

Additionally, some animals (e.g. ground-dwelling ones) who have special talents not recognized by the school like digging or burrowing, refuse to enroll, and instead start their own “private school” that values their natural abilities.

The allegory ends up exposing the problems of a “one-size-fits-all” education system: forcing every learner (animal) to fit into the same mould, regardless of innate strengths or aptitudes, leads many to underperform or lose their unique gifts; and those with unusual talents are ignored or penalized.

Education should not treat all learners as identical. Just as animals differ in their natural abilities, human students differ in talents, intelligences, and aptitudes. Forcing everyone to develop the same skills at the same pace, regardless of their innate strengths can demotivate, suppress talent, and produce mediocrity.

The Pitfalls of a One-Size-Fits-All System

Our education system often assesses individuals with diverse capabilities using a single, monotonous curriculum.

To maintain uniformity, every student is required to take the same exam.

When a student excels in exams, we often assume they have a high IQ. But is this really true? Not entirely. Exams and subjects do not define the overall intelligence or capabilities of a student. A scorecard only reflects how well a student has memorized and reproduced information on paper. It measures retention and retrieval, but intelligence is far broader than memory.

However, those who struggle or fail to perform are labeled as “below average,” “failures,” or simply “promoted without merit.” Parents and teachers often reinforce these labels, summarizing a student’s identity as “weak” or “good for nothing.” These words deeply wound a child’s self-esteem, leaving lasting mental impressions such as:

- * “I can’t do difficult things.”

- * “I can’t create an extraordinary life because I don’t excel in exams.”

- * “I am a shame to my parents.”

- * “I hate school and studying.”

This internalizing thoughts does not build resilience; it breaks confidence. Instead of nurturing hidden talents, it suppresses them. A child is like a seed: if you keep judging it only by how tall it grows in one season, you might never realize it was meant to bloom into a flower or bear fruit in its own time.

Meanwhile, students who manage to perform within this narrow framework may succeed academically, but that alone does not guarantee holistic intelligence.

Holistic intelligence is not simply the ability to memorize concepts. While memory is one component, true intelligence also encompasses problem-solving, reasoning, critical thinking, emotional awareness, creativity, and the ability to learn from experience. These qualities shape real potential and pave the way for lifelong success.

Think of intelligence like a tree. Its roots, curiosity, enthusiasm, motivation, and nurturing experiences, anchor and nourish it, providing the foundation for growth. The branches of the tree, memory, problem solving, critical thinking, logical reasoning, innovation, artistic ability, resilience, emotional awareness, empathy, communication skills, collaboration, leadership, self discipline, confidence, decision making, time management, organization, integrity, and compassion, spread wide and grow strong. Memorization, represented by memory, is just one branch. Judging a child's intelligence by a single branch alone is like admiring one part of a tree while ignoring the richness and potential of the whole.

Therefore, exam results or scorecards should neither be regarded as nor relied upon as the complete measure of a child's potential . A fair education system recognizes and nurtures each individual's strengths, providing flexibility and personalized approaches that enable every child to flourish in their own unique way.

4. Life Skills overshadowed by Academic skills

Education systems often prioritize academic achievement, grades, test scores, and subject mastery, while life skills and socio-emotional competencies receive limited structured attention. However, global education bodies like UNESCO, WHO, and OECD emphasize that life skills are equally

essential for success, well-being, and responsible citizenship.

Below are well-recognized life-skill areas that experts consider crucial:

1.Socio-Emotional Skills (SEL)

Research in educational psychology shows that socio-emotional learning builds:

Self-awareness

Emotional regulation

Empathy

Conflict resolution

Decision-making

Schools that integrate SEL into the curriculum show:

Higher academic performance

Reduced behavioral issues

Better student well-being

(Findings widely supported by CASEL—Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.)

2.Psychological Skills

These skills support mental resilience:

Coping strategies

Stress management

Growth mindset

Self-esteem building

Problem-solving skills

Studies show that early training in these areas reduces anxiety and improves students' ability to handle academic and social pressure.

3.Communication & Interpersonal Skills

Regardless of career path, students need:

Effective speaking and listening

Collaboration and teamwork

Assertiveness without aggression

Cultural and emotional sensitivity

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), through its “Future of Education and Skills” framework, highlights communication as one of the core competencies required for the 21st century.

4.Practical and Executive Life Skills

These skills help students manage life independently:

Time management

Financial literacy

Planning and organization

Responsible decision-making

Adaptability in new situations

Schools that embed these skills produce more confident and capable young adults.

5. Digital Literacy & Media Awareness

Today's students grow up in a digital world, and need:

Safe online behavior

Critical evaluation of information

Understanding digital footprints

UNESCO lists digital literacy as a foundational 21st century skill.

6.Character Development & Ethics

Education should also nurture inner qualities:

Patience

Integrity

Respect

Responsibility

Self-discipline

Compassion

These traits guide students' behavior, relationships, and future leadership potential.

Why These Skills Are Often Overlooked

1.Academic pressure and standardized exams dominate learning.

2.Schools often lack trained staff for psychological and emotional development programs.

3.Parents and society tend to value visible achievements over inner growth.

4. In many cultures, conversations about self-esteem, emotional challenges, and personal development are often avoided, treated as private or sensitive matters, and sometimes even regarded as taboo.

Choosing Careers Beyond Just Desire

When it comes to making career choices, many students and parents look towards esteemed fields like medicine, engineering, law, or the arts, often guided primarily by personal interest or the influence of societal expectations. Although ambition and enthusiasm are valuable starting points, they are not sufficient on their own. True career alignment and long-term success come when three essential elements work together: aptitude, personality, and interest.

1. Aptitude – The foundation Skill

Aptitude refers to a person's inborn potential or natural ability to learn certain skills or perform specific tasks. It is not about what a student already knows (knowledge), but about how quickly and efficiently they can learn and apply a skill in a given domain.

For example, someone with strong analytical thinking, numerical reasoning, and problem-solving ability may thrive in engineering or finance. However, if such a person is deeply interested in another field, or if they are persuaded by parents to pursue a career that does not align with their natural strengths, frustration often follows. Over time, this mismatch can lead to stress, underperformance, and even a loss of confidence.

Recognizing aptitude early and analysing its role is essential to prevent the struggle that arises from pursuing paths disconnected from one's true abilities.

2. Personality – The Fit between Self and Work

While aptitude focuses on ability, personality determines how well a person adapts to the environment and demands of a particular area. For example, a highly extroverted or social individual may flourish in fields like sales, media, hospitality, etc., whereas an introverted, detail-oriented person may find greater satisfaction in research, data analysis, software development, etc. A mismatch between personality and career often leads to burnout, even if the person is talented in the field. Understanding personality traits ensures not just performance but also long-term fulfilment. For example, Ahmed, a highly introverted and detail-oriented, enjoying research and independent work. Yet, he chose a career in sales, drawn by the allure of high income and social prestige. His natural personality made constant client interactions exhausting, leading to burnout and frustration. Despite having the skills to succeed in other fields, misalignment with his personality created persistent dissatisfaction.

3. Interest – The Driver of Motivation

Interest is the spark that sustains effort. It fuels curiosity, creativity, and perseverance during challenges. While aptitude and personality set the foundation, interest gives meaning to the work. Without genuine interest, even the most skilled individual can lose motivation, while strong interest without aptitude or personality fit can lead to struggle and disappointment..

For instance, a student excelled in numbers and logic (aptitude), enjoyed teaching children (interest), and was patient and empathetic (personality). Initially, she considered accounting but realized she lacked enthusiasm for routine office work. Eventually, she combined all three elements by becoming a math educator, a career that utilized her natural abilities, aligned with her passion, and suited her personality—demonstrating the ideal convergence for career fulfilment.

Bringing It All Together

True career success is found at the intersection of these three elements, aptitude, personality and interest. Aptitude ensures competence, personality ensures harmony with the work environment, and interest ensures passion. When any one of these is missing, imbalance occurs: talent without passion becomes monotonous, passion without skill becomes unsustainable, and personality without alignment leads to dissatisfaction. But when all three converge, individuals not only succeed but thrive, creating careers that are both rewarding and enduring.

Let Your Career Enhance Your Life, Not Consume It

A career is undoubtedly a significant aspect of life, as it provides purpose, identity, structure, and financial stability. However, it should not define your entire existence. Too often, I have seen individuals equate their profession with their worth. They pour all their energy into work, sacrificing relationships, health, faith, emotional well-being, and personal growth in the process.

A truly fulfilling life is multidimensional. Beyond a meaningful career, we also need loving relationships,

spiritual grounding, mental peace, physical health, and a sense of community and contribution. A career should support these areas, not overshadow or replace them. When balance is lost, external success may still be achieved, but inner emptiness remains.

Pursue excellence in your profession, but never lose sight of the person you are beyond it. You are not defined by your job title. You are a whole human being with a heart, a soul, and a purpose that extends far beyond earning and performing.

CHAPTER 6

Biopsyche

Food, Mind and the Gut Connection

The age-old saying, “you are what you eat,” finds scientific support in modern research that highlights the profound connection between food, the gut, and the mind. This connection, known as the gut–brain axis, is a two-way communication system involving the nervous system, the immune system, and biochemical messengers. Signals travel through the vagus nerve and neurotransmitters such as serotonin, which play a crucial role in mood regulation and mental health.

This connection can be understood through the concept of the “bio-psyche,” reflecting the deep interplay between the body and the mind. What you eat (bio) shapes how you think and feel (psyche), and in turn, your emotions and stress levels influence digestion and overall gut health. This makes the gut–brain axis not just a biological pathway, but a powerful illustration of how the body and mind are inseparably connected.

Emotional states such as anxiety or sadness can make the gut more sensitive, leading to nausea, indigestion, or stomach cramps. For example, someone feeling nervous may experience “butterflies” in the stomach, while an employee under constant work pressure might develop acid reflux or chronic indigestion.

The gut is often referred to as the “second brain” because of its vast network of neurons, known as the enteric nervous system, and its ability to produce key neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine. Remarkably, about 90 percent of the body’s serotonin, a neurotransmitter central to regulating mood, is produced in the gut. This clearly shows how deeply the gut influences both emotional well-being and cognitive functions.

The food we eat directly feeds the trillions of bacteria living in our gut, our inner ecosystem, known as the microbiome. When nourished with whole, nutrient-rich foods, this ecosystem thrives, strengthening the connection between the gut and brain. This harmony supports clear thinking, emotional balance, and resilience against stress. Taking care of the gut is, in many ways, taking care of the mind.

When our eating habits are unhealthy, the delicate conversation between the gut and brain begins to break down, gradually eroding both physical vitality and mental harmony. Over time, diets heavy in processed or junk foods disturb the natural balance of gut bacteria, creating discomfort such as bloating and indigestion. If these imbalances persist, the gut sends ongoing distress signals to the brain, which may eventually manifest as heightened stress, persistent anxiety, irritability, symptoms of depression or even cognitive decline.

This continuous dialogue between the gut and mind reminds us that food is more than fuel, it shapes our thoughts, moods, and overall balance in life.

Scientific Evidence Supporting the Connection -

Emerging research links specific dietary patterns to mental health outcomes. For example:

Mediterranean Diet: This diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, nuts, and fish, has been associated with a reduced risk of depression.

Western Diet: High consumption of sugary and processed foods correlates with increased rates of mental health disorders.

Gut Microbiota Modulation: Probiotic supplementation has shown promise in alleviating symptoms of anxiety and depression in some studies.

Strengthening the Connection

- To harness the mind-gut connection, individuals can adopt dietary habits that prioritize gut health and mental well-being. Eating a variety of fibre-rich, plant-based foods to diversify gut bacteria. Reducing sugar and processed food intake to minimize inflammation. Practicing mindful eating(without digital distraction). Focus on the taste, texture, and smell of your food. Chew slowly and savour each bite to improve digestion and reduce stress-related gut discomfort & try to avoid any stressful conversations while eating.
- Positive social interactions can reduce stress and improve mood, contributing to a healthier gut-brain connection. Spend time with loved ones, even if it's a short phone call or a brief walk together. Socializing can boost the production of oxytocin, a hormone that promotes happiness and reduces stress.
- Smoking, caffeine and alcohol can irritate the gut contributing to stress. Keep a check on your unhealthy addictions that serve only temporary satisfaction.

- A calm environment reduces stress, which benefits both the mind and the gut. Create a peaceful space in your home with no distractions, whether through calming lighting, or a cosy corner for reading or prayers. A soothing environment can help maintain a calm mind and gut.
- Staying hydrated supports digestion and helps maintain the mucosal lining in the gut. Dehydration can lead to digestive issues and affect brain function.
- Good quality sleep helps the body repair itself, including the gut. Sleep also regulates the hormones that influence stress and hunger. Create a calming nighttime routine and limit screen time 1 hour before bed to improve your sleep quality.
- Physical activity improves digestion, reduces stress, and supports the production of endorphins, which boost mood and reduce anxiety. Activities like daily home chores, walking, yoga, cycling, or swimming can be stress-relieving and gut-friendly.

Daily Chores and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) Perspective

The key to a depression-free life is to develop healthier patterns of behaviour where each day contains important and/or enjoyable activities that help you feel fulfilled and as if your life has a purpose". – Carl W. Lejuez et al., 2011.

When feeling low, people often lose interest in engaging with others, maintaining their surroundings, or staying physically active. This can create a loop where improvement in mood depends on becoming more active, yet action is delayed because one is waiting to feel better first. We don't start feeling better until we become more active, but we don't become more active because we're

waiting to feel better. while emotions may not always be under our control, our choices and behaviours are. Relying on motivation before taking action can trap us in ongoing inactivity, prolonging distress.

However, by choosing to engage in positive, goal-directed actions, even when we don't feel like doing it, we can gradually shift our emotional state. For example Ali feels tired, low, and doesn't feel like doing anything. He thinks, "I'll go for a walk or clean my room once I feel better." But days pass, and he still feels the same—stuck and sad.

Then one day, even though he doesn't feel to do it, he decides to get up and take a short walk. After 10 minutes in the fresh air, he starts to feel a little lighter. He comes back and makes himself a cup of tea. Slowly, his mood begins to shift and he starts doing the chores. This shows that even a small actions like walking, cleaning, or stretching, can start to change how we feel. Waiting to feel better before doing anything can keep us stuck. But doing something, even when we don't feel like doing it, can help us feel better.

In earlier generations, both men and women were constantly engaged in physically demanding tasks. While awareness around mental health was limited, many likely experienced symptoms of anxiety or emotional distress without recognizing them as such. Yet, despite these challenges, they managed to carry on with their daily lives. One key reason was the sheer volume of physical activity they were involved in. Their Physical labour acted as a natural regulator of mood. Even in the absence of psychological insight or formal therapy, their engagement in consistent movement and purposeful action seemed to buffer against the impact of mental health struggles.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy(CBT) highlights the powerful connection between action and mood. One of its core principles is that we can often influence how we feel by changing what we do. Physical movement, even something as simple, can shift our emotional state. What the past time teaches us, and what CBT confirms, is this: action precedes emotion. Incorporating more physical activity into our routines isn't just about fitness, it can be a foundational tool for emotional resilience and healing.

Daily chores and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can work synergistically to reduce depression by addressing both physical activity and mental health. Physical Activation (Behavioural Activation) - Depression often leads to inactivity, which worsens low mood. Performing chores breaks this cycle by encouraging movement, even in small steps like cleaning your space.

Daily Chores and hormones

Daily chores can influence hormone secretion and help shift your focus away from overthinking or depressed mood by engaging your body and mind in productive activities. Here's how:

Endorphins: Daily Physical activities release endorphins(natural pain killer), the body's natural "feel-good" chemicals, which can improve mood, reduce stress, boost self-esteem and provide a sense of achievement. Endorphins are the body's built-in stress relievers, released in response to pain, physical work, or laughter. They create feelings of euphoria and help us endure challenges with resilience.

Cortisol regulation: Establishing a structured routine helps create stability, which is especially beneficial during times

of emotional distress. Engaging in structured chores can create a calming sense of control, helping to regulate cortisol levels(stress).

Dopamine : The physical outcome of completed chores (e.g., cleaning your living area) provides immediate gratification, reinforcing a sense of control and reducing mental clutter. Break big goals into small, achievable steps. Completing tasks triggers the release of dopamine, the "reward hormone," which provides a sense of satisfaction and motivates you to keep going.

Oxytocin (love hormone): If your chores involve caregiving (e.g., taking care of your parents or preparing a meal for a loved one), they can increase oxytocin, the "bonding hormone," fostering connection and reducing feelings of loneliness.

Serotonin: Serotonin regulates mood, sleep, appetite, digestion, and overall emotional stability. Often associated with feelings of calmness and contentment, it is crucial for maintaining balance.

Simple activities such as spending time outdoors, walking in natural light, or doing chores near a sunny window can help boost serotonin production. Serotonin is a key hormone for stabilizing mood, promoting feelings of well-being, and supporting healthy sleep patterns.

Hormones and Circadian Rhythm

Beyond neurotransmitters, our bodies operate on a finely tuned circadian rhythm, the natural 24-hour cycle aligned with the sun. Key hormones rise and fall according to this rhythm, shaping our energy, mood, metabolism, and even spiritual clarity.

Long before the hum of machines and the glow of city lights, human life moved in harmony with the sun and stars. In the quiet centuries of the 16th and 17th, across Europe — in England, France, Italy, Spain, and Germany and throughout much of Asia, including the Arabian Peninsula, Persia, India, China, and Japan, people lived by a gentle rhythm of rest and wakefulness. Nights often unfolded in two serene acts: after sunset, families would retire for their “first sleep,” then awaken softly around midnight for reflection, prayer, or meditation before returning to their “second sleep” until dawn. This natural pattern, beautifully synchronized with the rising and setting of the sun, nurtured a tranquil balance between body and mind.

But as the Industrial Revolution swept across nations, this harmony began to fade. The spread of gas lamps, the emergence of street lighting, and later the invention of electricity transformed night into an extension of day. Cities shimmered with light; factories introduced late shifts; and human lives gradually revolved around the mechanical rhythm of productivity rather than the celestial rhythm of nature. Our ancient bond with sunrise and sunset weakened, and our circadian rhythm quietly surrendered to the artificial glow of modernity.

Allah(SWT) mentions in Quran:

“And We made your sleep a means for rest,

And made the night as a covering,

And made the day for livelihood.” —Surah An-Naba (78:9–11)

- **Cortisol: The Morning Ignition Key**

Cortisol is often called the “stress hormone,” but in reality, it is essential for health and daily functioning. In healthy amounts, it boosts alertness, sharpens focus, regulates blood sugar, reduces inflammation, and motivates us to act. Cortisol follows a 24-hour circadian rhythm regulated by the HPA axis. Its levels are lowest during early sleep and begin rising toward the end of sleep. Cortisol reaches its peak just before or at wake-up time, typically around 7:00–8:00 a.m. This morning surge prepares the body for daily activity by activating multiple physiological systems.

However, when cortisol is produced in excess or remains elevated for long periods, it disrupts balance and contributes to stress, anxiety, and fatigue.

When you wake up late in the morning, the natural cortisol peak is missed or flattened, leaving you sluggish, and prone to fatigue. Early risers support a healthy cortisol rhythm, reducing the risk of burnout and anxiety.

- **Melatonin: The Sleep and Repair Hormone**

Melatonin signals the body to rest, repair, and rejuvenate. It rises at night, peaks during deep sleep, and fades when exposed to morning light.

Sunlight acts as a natural “off switch” for melatonin, helping you feel awake and alert.

Waking up late can leave melatonin lingering, causing brain fog.

Consequences of disruption: poor sleep quality, weak immunity, mood imbalances, and reduced cellular repair.

- **Growth Hormone: The Natural Healer**

Growth hormone (GH) is released by the body in pulses, and the strongest and most important pulse happens shortly after a person falls asleep. Research shows that this big release of GH is closely tied to the first period of deep sleep, known as slow-wave sleep. During this stage, the brain and body enter their most restorative phase, and the hormonal system triggers a surge of GH that supports tissue repair, muscle growth, metabolism, and overall recovery.

Sleeping at a healthy and consistent time helps the body enter deep sleep more easily, which can enhance natural GH release. However, disrupted, irregular, or shallow sleep reduces both deep sleep and GH secretion, weakening recovery, resilience, and overall vitality over time.

- **Insulin : The Energy Keeper**

Insulin is also one of the vital hormones influenced by the circadian rhythm. It is responsible for controlling blood glucose levels and energy metabolism. The body's sensitivity to insulin is not constant throughout the day; it follows a rhythmic pattern. Typically, insulin sensitivity is higher during the morning and decreases toward the evening. This means the body processes and utilizes glucose more efficiently earlier in the day. Disruptions in the sleep-wake cycle, such as staying up late, irregular eating patterns, or night shifts, can disturb this natural rhythm, leading to impaired insulin response, increased fat storage, and a higher risk of metabolic disorders such as insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes.

Maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, eating meals at regular times, and aligning one's lifestyle with the body's

natural rhythm helps sustain hormonal harmony — keeping not just sleep and energy in balance, but also metabolism, mood, and long-term health.

A World Out Of Rhythm

- Our modern lifestyle is drifting far from the natural rhythm that once guided human living.
- Long corporate hours, night shifts, and irregular routines have turned our days and nights upside down. We stay awake when the world sleeps and sleep when the sun rises.
- Physical activity has diminished, due to reduced manual work at offices and in daily life, while artificial intelligence and screen-based tasks have multiplied, increasing mental and physical fatigue.
- Fast food has replaced mindful eating and nourishment.
- Stress has become a constant companion, and material success has taken precedence over peace, simplicity, and family connection.
- Family time today often feels like keeping screens between us. Even elderly family members, unlike in previous generations when they would share stories, wisdom, and experiences, are now often absorbed in their own videos and digital entertainment. With endless choices on phones, TVs, and the internet, everyone is busy in their own digital world, leaving little real time to connect meaningfully with one another.
- We live in air-conditioned rooms, yet we no longer acknowledge the natural oxygen rich air flowing from green spaces. We may live without fresh air but

we cannot imagine surviving without wifi/smart devices in our homes.

- The last hour before we sleep is a period when alpha brainwaves naturally become more active, fostering creativity and mental openness. Whatever fills this time—conversation, reflection, imagination, or quiet contemplation—gets readily absorbed and recorded by the mind. Even after we fall asleep, the brain continues to process these impressions, which is why bedtime stories and thoughts from this hour often stay with us, lasting well into adulthood. Today, however, this precious pre-sleep hour is often consumed by endless scrolling and digital distractions. Bright screens and rapid content overstimulate the brain, disrupt the natural circadian rhythm, and interfere with the transition into restful sleep—ultimately affecting hormonal balance and long-term cognitive and emotional well-being.
- In the pre-smartphone era, when a child cried, we comforted them, helping them process their emotions and learn to cope with distress. In today's technological era, however, a crying child is often handed a phone, tablet, or YouTube video instead of the emotional guidance they truly need. While this may quiet them or distract them in the moment, it doesn't target the root cause of their emotions, leaving them without the tools to cope with their upsetting emotions. Over time, this creates gaps in emotional resilience and coping skills, shaping a generation less equipped to handle frustration and disappointment.
- Our minds are in a constant rush with no pause for perspective. A rush to acquire everything, yet ending up with nothing. We are inspired by earning more,

by achieving more, by mastering technology and intelligence, but we are left with loop holes in mental well-being, in physical health, and in the harmony that once connected us to nature and nurture. This, perhaps, is the greatest loss of humankind.

- When we move against the laws of nature, nature responds — and we see the reflections of this imbalance in our bodies, our homes, and our surroundings.

Consequences of Living Against the Natural Rhythm-

For Women:

- Rising fertility challenges and hormonal imbalances
- Shift work shows association with irregular menstrual cycles and conditions like PCOS and thyroid dysfunction
- Increased stress-related disorders and emotional exhaustion
- Sleep disturbances, mental health issues, weight fluctuations etc.

For Men:

- Decreasing testosterone levels and reproductive health issues
- Chronic fatigue and loss of motivation
- Irregular or insufficient sleep affects hormone secretion, alertness, and cognitive function
- Rising mental health concerns like anxiety and irritability
- Reduced physical vitality due to poor diet and stress

- Disrupted Circadian rhythm increases insulin resistance, obesity risk, hypertension, inflammation etc.

For Children:

- Early exposure to screens and disturbed sleep patterns
- Weakened immunity and lack of outdoor physical play
- Attention difficulties and emotional dysregulation
- Reduced bonding time with family due to digital distractions. With limited exposure to diverse social situations, children are developing weaker social skills and emotional understanding, which can affect their ability to communicate, and empathize.

For the Home Environment:

- Less communication and shared family moments
- Homes filled with noise and digital chaos instead of calm presence

Bio psyche - Mind, Body, in Harmony

At its core, the human system is not a collection of separate parts but a symphony of connections, the mind guiding the body, the body signalling the mind. Our thoughts influence our hormones, our food shapes our emotions, and our daily rhythm writes the pattern of our well-being. When the mind is healed, the body follows; when the body is nourished, the mind finds peace.

CHAPTER 7

Psychosomatic Illness

The word "psychosomatic" is derived from two Greek words: psyche (mind) and soma (body). It refers to physical symptoms or medical conditions that are caused, influenced, or worsened by emotional or mental factors. Although the symptoms appear in the body, their origin or intensity is significantly linked to the mind's state.

In the silent chambers of the mind, emotions rise and fall like tides. But what happens when those emotions are never acknowledged, never processed, never released? They find refuge in the body. And the body, being the most honest part of our existence, speaks through pain, fatigue, tension, disease. Negative emotions when suppressed, unprocessed, or chronic, can significantly impact the body and contribute to the development or worsening of many physiological diseases. This connection is often referred to as psychosomatic illness. This is the realm of psychosomatic illness, where emotional wounds create physical symptoms.

In the silent chambers of the mind, emotions rise and fall like tides. But what happens when those emotions are never acknowledged, never processed, never released? They find refuge in the body. And the body, being the most honest part of our existence, speaks through pain, fatigue, tension, disease. Negative emotions when suppressed, unprocessed, or chronic, can significantly impact the body and contribute to the development or worsening of many physiological diseases. This connection is often referred to as

psychosomatic illness. This is the realm of psychosomatic illness, where emotional wounds create physical symptoms.

When we face emotional trauma loss, anger, anxiety, the body responds with stress hormones like cortisol and adrenaline. These hormones are meant for short-term survival. But when stress becomes chronic, it leads to:

- Hypertension
- Weakened immunity
- Insulin resistance
- Inflammation
- Digestive dysfunction
- Neurological imbalances
- Skin and Hair Problems
- Behavioural / Lifestyle Consequences
- Psychological/ Emotional effects
- Reproductive issues

Modern research in psychosomatic medicine and psychoneuroimmunology demonstrates that persistent stress affects the autonomic nervous system, the endocrine system — particularly the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis — and the immune system, creating a cascade of physiological changes that disturb the body’s internal balance and increase vulnerability to disease. Physical symptoms such as pain, fatigue, or digestive issues are not signs that the body is betraying us; rather, they represent meaningful communication, inviting us to pay closer attention to our inner emotional world and underlying psychological states.

In psychology and medicine, the physical symptoms influenced or worsened by emotional or psychological factors are not imagined or “made up”; they reflect a well-

documented mind-body interaction studies across medicine, psychology, and neuroscience. This perspective is supported by major health and scientific institutions such as:

American Psychological Association (APA)

World Health Organization (WHO)

National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Healing Psychosomatic Conditions

If unresolved emotions can contribute to physical illness, then healing those emotions can also activate physical recovery. True healing doesn't just come from pills or surgeries, it begins with understanding the mind-body relationship, recognizing where pain originates, and learning how to safely release it.

Healing psychosomatic illness requires a holistic approach, addressing the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual levels simultaneously.

1. Self-Awareness

Before healing can begin, we must listen to the body's language. Pain, fatigue, skin eruptions,

headaches, they are not random. Each one is a message from your inner world.

2. Journaling

“When you journal, your pain is acknowledged, and the quiet whispers of your suffering are finally heard. The moment you recognize it, the healing begins.”

Journaling acts as a bridge between the conscious and subconscious mind. It allows individuals to give language to their emotions, especially the ones they habitually suppress or struggle to express in conversation. When feelings are bottled up, they don't disappear—they find expression through the body. By writing them down, the mind gets a safe outlet, reducing the emotional pressure that can contribute to physical symptoms.

Benefits of Journaling in Psychosomatic Healing :

- **Emotional Release:** Writing provides a safe, non-judgmental space to express anger, grief, fear, or shame—emotions that often feed psychosomatic conditions.
- **Pattern Recognition:** Over time, journal entries reveal recurring themes and triggers. Recognizing these patterns helps in understanding the mind-body connection.
- **Stress Reduction:** The simple act of writing slows down racing thoughts and lowers stress hormones, which can positively impact physical health.
- **Self-Awareness:** Journaling encourages self-reflection, helping individuals notice how certain thoughts, relationships, or situations affect their well-being.

Types of Journaling for Psychosomatic Illness (Research-Based)

Journaling can be a helpful tool for people experiencing psychosomatic symptoms, as it supports emotional processing, stress reduction, and awareness of the mind-body connection (Pennebaker & Chung, 2011).

- **Free Writing / Expressive Writing**

Write continuously without editing or censoring. Let thoughts and emotions flow naturally.

Research Insight: Expressive writing about emotions or stressful experiences can improve mood, reduce stress, and even benefit physical health, such as

lowering blood pressure and improving immune function (Pennebaker & Chung, 2011).

- Prompt-Based / Guided Journaling

Use questions to explore feelings, emotions, and body sensations. Examples:

“What am I feeling in my body today?”

“What emotion might be connected to this pain?”

“I’m angry because...”

“What I never got to say was...”

“I feel stuck in my body because...”

Research Insight: Guided journaling helps link emotions to physical sensations, enhances self-awareness, and may reduce psychosomatic symptoms (Smyth, 1998).

- Gratitude Journaling

Focus on positive experiences and what is going well.

Research Insight: Writing about gratitude or positive events can reduce stress, improve mood, and support overall well-being, complementing other journaling types (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

Journaling — whether free writing, prompt-based, or gratitude-focused — can help process emotions, reduce

stress, and improve awareness of how emotions affect the body. Combining these approaches may offer the greatest benefit for psychosomatic health.

Over time, journaling transforms from a simple writing exercise into a form of self-therapy. It doesn't replace professional medical care but complements it, allowing the individual to engage actively in their own healing. For psychosomatic illnesses, where the body and mind are deeply intertwined, journaling is not just a record it's a release, a mirror, and a medicine. Write until the emotion is released from your chest onto the page.

3.Therapeutic intervention

"A therapist can guide and support a client in taking steps forward, but it is ultimately the client who chooses their own path."

A therapist creates a safe, non-judgmental space where the client feels heard and validated. Their focus is not on fixing the problem immediately but on facilitating self-discovery, emotional processing, and inner healing. This deep, intentional presence helps clients explore their thoughts and feelings without fear of being misunderstood.

A layman even though with good intentions may unknowingly dismiss their emotions by phrases like "Here's what I would do", "Your overthinking", "I've gone through worse" , "This happens with everyone ".

Sometimes, what a person truly needs is not just someone to "fix" their problem, but someone to listen without judgment, hear them fully, and believe in their ability to grow.

Empathy is the ability to fully enter a client's perspective, seeing and feeling their experience as they

do, while setting aside one's own judgments and assumptions. It goes beyond understanding words; it

involves recognizing the client's emotions, validating their experiences, and responding with sensitivity. When a therapist demonstrates empathy, they create a safe environment where clients feel understood, supported, and empowered to explore and heal.

Empathy, in the therapeutic setting, is not just about feeling for someone, it is about feeling with them, walking beside them emotionally, and helping them make sense of their experiences.

The Person-Centred Therapeutic Approach

Carl Rogers, one of the most influential figures in humanistic psychology, believed that every individual has the potential to grow, heal, and thrive, this growth occurs in a safe, empathetic, and non-judgmental environment. The role of the therapist is to provide that environment, not by solving the client's problems, but by truly understanding them. The person-centred approach reminds us that healing does not come from solutions imposed from the outside, but from being deeply understood from within.

According to Rogers, three core conditions make therapy effective:

Empathy – Deeply feeling and understanding the client's experience from their point of view.

Unconditional Positive Regard – Accepting the client completely without judgment, regardless of what they share.

Congruence – Being genuine, authentic, and transparent.

In contrast, a person-centred therapist holds space for the client's emotional world to unfold, allowing healing to happen from within.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)- Rewiring the Mind to Learn and Unlearn Behaviours

Human behaviour is not random, it's shaped by thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and past experiences. Some of these patterns help us grow. Others keep us stuck, afraid, or unhappy. The beauty of the human brain is this: what has been learned can be unlearned. And new ways of thinking and behaving can be trained.

This is the core power of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) — a scientifically proven method to retrain the mind by changing thought patterns and actions. One of the most hopeful truths in psychology is neuroplasticity — the brain's ability to rewire itself. CBT uses this principle practically: when we repeatedly practice new thoughts and actions, the brain forms new pathways. Old habits weaken. New ones grow stronger.

Example:

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a common psychosomatic disorder in which patients experience abdominal pain, bloating, and changes in bowel habits without any detectable structural abnormalities. Psychological factors such as stress, anxiety, and

maladaptive thought patterns can significantly exacerbate these symptoms.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has been shown to be effective in treating IBS by addressing both the cognitive and behavioral contributors to symptom maintenance. In a typical CBT program, patients receive psychoeducation to understand how stress and thoughts influence their physical symptoms. They then engage in cognitive restructuring, learning to identify catastrophic thoughts like “I’ll never be able to eat out without pain” and replace them with more balanced perspectives such as “I might feel some discomfort, but I can manage it and continue my plans.”

Behavioural techniques involve gradually resuming daily activities and exposure to situations previously avoided due to fear of symptoms. Patients also learn stress management and relaxation strategies, including diaphragmatic breathing, mindfulness, and progressive muscle relaxation, to reduce physiological arousal that can worsen symptoms. Research indicates that patients receiving CBT for IBS experience significant reductions in symptom severity, improved quality of life, and sustained benefits at follow-up, demonstrating the therapy’s effectiveness in managing psychosomatic illnesses (Lackner et al., 2018). However, the effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy can vary from person to person, depending on individual factors such as motivation, insight, and the specific nature of their symptoms.”

•Hypnotherapy

Hypnotherapy is a therapeutic technique in which a trained practitioner guides a person into a relaxed and focused state of mind, often called hypnosis. In this state, the person is

more open to positive suggestions that can help change thoughts, behaviours, or how they experience physical sensations. It is used for a variety of conditions, including stress, anxiety, pain, and psychosomatic disorders, where the mind and body are closely connected.

Hypnotherapy has emerged as a promising approach for treating psychosomatic illnesses, where stress, anxiety, and psychological factors influence physical symptoms. During hypnotherapy, a trained clinician helps the patient modify how they perceive and respond to physical symptoms through techniques such as symptom-focused suggestions, relaxation, and self-hypnosis. Research shows that hypnotherapy can reduce symptoms in conditions such as chronic pain, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, headaches, insomnia, and stress-related complaints. Meta-analyses indicate moderate to large benefits in symptom reduction, daily functioning, and quality of life (Flammer & Alladin, 2007; Rosendahl et al., 2024). The effectiveness of hypnotherapy varies from person to person, depending on individual responsiveness and the nature of their symptoms.

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT)

Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) is a mind-body approach that combines gentle tapping on specific points of the body with focused attention on thoughts or emotions. It is designed to help reduce stress, anxiety, and emotional tension, which can sometimes contribute to physical symptoms. Research suggests that EFT may help improve mood, relieve anxiety, and support overall emotional well-being. Several studies have found positive effects of EFT on stress, depression, and trauma-related symptoms, showing

that this technique can be a helpful tool for managing both emotional and psychosomatic concerns.

While it is not a replacement for medical treatment, EFT can be a valuable complementary mind and body tool that works alongside medical care to help alleviate psychological distress and reduce psychosomatic symptoms. By addressing both emotional and physical aspects of stress, EFT can support overall mental and physical health in a holistic way.

.Art Therapy

Art therapy is a therapeutic approach that uses creative activities such as drawing, painting, or sculpting to help individuals express emotions, manage stress, and enhance self-awareness. Many psychosomatic and stress-related problems arise when emotions like grief, shame, anger, or guilt remain unspoken and become “stored” in the body. Art therapy bypasses the rational mind and gives direct access to the subconscious, where many unresolved traumas and emotional conflicts reside. Neuroscience shows that art-making activates the medial prefrontal cortex, which is involved in self-referential thoughts and emotional regulation. It also reduces cortisol levels, lowering stress. By externalizing what is inside, the mind and body can process, release, and make sense of those feelings, reducing emotional and physical strain and fostering a sense of relief and healing.

Research indicates that it can be particularly beneficial for people with psychosomatic illnesses, where psychological stress manifests as physical symptoms. Studies have shown that art therapy can improve emotional well-being, reduce anxiety and depression, and enhance overall quality of life. While evidence for directly alleviating physical symptoms

is more limited, art therapy is widely recognized as a valuable complementary approach alongside medical treatment or conventional psychotherapy. By offering a non-verbal outlet for emotions and supporting mind-body integration, it provides a meaningful way for individuals to process feelings and cope with stress-related somatic conditions.

Where Colour Meets Emotion

When clients choose colours in therapy, their selections often reveal subconscious emotions. For example:

Frequent use of black or grey may indicate emotional suppression or unresolved trauma.

Bright, warm tones like yellow and orange often reflect energy, healing, or attempts to access joy.

Soft blues and greens may signal a search for peace or emotional regulation.

However, colour interpretations in therapy are not fixed or universal. Personal associations always matter. For example, someone might see blue as sadness, while another sees it as freedom.

4. Regulate the Nervous System

Most Psychosomatic symptoms often arise when the nervous system is stuck in survival mode -fight, flight, or freeze. Research shows that healing requires signalling safety to the body so it can return to balance (homeostasis).

Breath and vocal care

A conscious, calm breathing practice, including deep diaphragmatic breathing exercises, helps regulate the

nervous system, supporting a shift from survival mode to calm and balanced.

Practices that involve slow, rhythmic, and intentional vocalizations—such as reciting the Quran or repeating Zikr, have been shown to stimulate the vagus nerve, promoting parasympathetic activity.

A 2022 systematic review, *The Impact of Listening to, Reciting, or Memorizing the Quran on Physical and Mental Health of Muslims*, found that engaging in these practices was associated with improvements in depression, anxiety, physiological measures, quality of life, sleep quality, and overall mental and physical health. The review highlighted the potential of Qur'anic practices as non-pharmacological interventions to support mental and physical well-being.

Research on the elderly in Indonesia, *The Dhikr and the Mental Health of the Elderly in Aceh, Indonesia*, reported that participation in dhikr assemblies was significantly linked to better mental health outcomes. Participants experienced lower levels of anxiety and depression and improved emotional well-being compared to those who did not participate.

Additionally, a 2020 literature review, *The Quranic-Based Healing through Sound and its Psychological Effect*, summarized evidence that listening to or reciting the Qur'an can improve psychological and physiological functioning. The review found that these practices help reduce stress and anxiety, lower heart rate, and enhance mood and overall mental health.

Vagus Nerve Stimulation and Gentle Yoga

Gentle yoga, especially neck- and chest-opening poses, combined with slow, mindful breathing and relaxed movement can stimulate the Vagal activity, improve heart rate variability, and calms the nervous system.

By enhancing parasympathetic (“rest and digest”) function, these practices help regulate stress responses and support autonomic balance. This nervous system regulation can reduce the intensity of stress-related physical symptoms, improve emotional resilience, and provide a complementary approach in the management of psychosomatic illnesses

5. Spiritual Healing

“O’ Allah (SWT) I surrender my pain to You. Heal what I cannot understand.”

Holding on to regret, resentment, guilt, or grief keeps the body in a chronic state of stress and inflammation, worsening psychosomatic symptoms. Spiritual healing emphasizes the transformative power of forgiveness—both toward oneself and others. Forgiveness is an act of self-liberation; it does not change the past, but it frees your present and future. By letting go of past pain and entrusting it to Allah SWT, Healing reaches its greatest power when we entrust our pain to Almighty Allah(SWT).

Illnesses in life can be understood in two broad ways: some arise from our own actions, choices, and lifestyles, while others occur by the will of Allah, beyond our control. When a sickness comes solely by His will, every moment of pain and suffering becomes a source of divine reward.

On the other hand, when an illness is a consequence of our own actions, it serves as a reminder and a call to return to Allah, guiding us back to the path of righteousness and spiritual renewal. When we sincerely repent and turn back towards Allah, not only is forgiveness granted, but the pain and hardship endured also transform into spiritual reward.

Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: “No fatigue, nor disease, nor sorrow, nor sadness, nor harm, nor distress befalls a Muslim, even if it were the prick of a thorn, but that Allah expiates some of his sins thereby.” Sahih al- Bukhari

In this way, every illness, whether a test from Allah or a result of our own choices, paves the way for the gift of forgiveness, immense growth, and healing

Ponder for the reader: How merciful is our Creator, who turns both our joys and our hardships into sources of reward and forgiveness? In His mercy, even our

struggles carry meaning, a chance for purification and closeness to Him. What made us turn away from Him and His promises?

1. And your Lord says, 'Call upon Me; I will respond to you.' — Surah Ghafir (40:60)

2. So, indeed, with hardship comes ease. Indeed, with hardship comes ease." — Surah Ash-Sharh (94:5-6)

3. Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear..." — Surah Al-Baqarah (2:286)

4. "If you are grateful, I will surely increase you [in favor]but if you deny, indeed, My punishment is severe." “ — Surah Ibrahim (14:7)

5. "Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of

Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful." — Surah Az-Zumar (39:53)

Indeed, these verses are divine promises: assurances from our creator that every hardship carries ease, every prayer is answered, every burden is within our capacity, gratitude is multiplied, and Allah's mercy is greater than our sins.

Al-Bara' bin 'Azib narrated that messenger of Allah, Muhammad (SAW) taught a supplication to say before sleeping:

"Whenever you go to bed, perform Wudu' as you do

for Salat then (before sleeping) recite:

'O Allah! I have submitted myself to You, I have turned myself to You, I entrust my affair to You, and I commit myself to You in hope and in fear of You. There is no refuge and no place of safety but with You. I believe in the Book (the Quran) You have revealed and in the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) You have sent.'

"Messenger of Allah added: *"If anyone recites these words and dies during the night, he will die on the true Deen, and if he remains alive till the morning, he will obtain good. And make this supplication your last words (before sleeping)."* (Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

Healing Is a Process, Not a One-Time Event

Healing psychosomatic illness isn't overnight. It's a journey of coming home to yourself — layer by layer, emotion by emotion. Be patient. Be Consistent. Trust your body's wisdom.

"When the soul is heard, the body begins to repair."

CHAPTER 8

Mind – The Silent Power Within

The language of Stillness – exploring brain waves and Spiritual Consciousness

In our increasingly restless world, the human mind is constantly overstimulated, moving from one task to another, flooded with notifications, and tangled in unfinished thoughts. Yet beneath this mental noise lies a subtle and forgotten rhythm, the natural stillness of the brain. It is within this stillness that clarity awakens and healing begins to unfold. Practices such as meditation, prayer, silence, and mindful breathing are not merely spiritual traditions; they are powerful and scientifically grounded ways of guiding the brain into restorative states. In these moments of quiet awareness, the mind attunes to deeper levels of consciousness where renewal, insight, and transformation naturally arise.

Understanding Brain Waves

The brain continuously communicates through rhythmic electrical patterns known as brain waves, each associated with a different state of mind.

- **Beta waves :** This brain wave state is associated with the active, alert mind. Their frequency corresponds to active thinking, focused attention , alertness, problem-solving, and logical reasoning, supporting sustained mental performance. However, when

dominant for long periods, beta activity can also give rise to mental fatigue, anxiety, and overthinking.

- Alpha waves : A calm, relaxed state, often linked with creativity and light meditation.
- Theta waves : The twilight zone between wakefulness and sleep, where imagination, healing, and deep memory reside.
- Delta wave: The slowest wave, dominant in deep, dreamless sleep, essential for physical renewal.
- Gamma wave: The fastest wave, linked to insight, heightened awareness, and peak cognitive performance.

Among these, theta waves hold a unique mystery. They are the brain's bridge between the conscious and the subconscious, the mind and the soul.

The Power of Theta Waves:

Theta waves are like an inner doorway, the moment between wakefulness and sleep where the mind is quiet, but deeply receptive. In this state, the body relaxes, inner defenses dissolve, and the subconscious becomes accessible. Memories resurface, emotions release, and the mind opens to healing.

Neuroscientists describe theta as the frequency of intuition, learning, and memory consolidation. spiritual traditions describe it as the state of prayer, presence, and connection with the Divine. Both are true, science and spirituality are simply two languages describing the same inner reality.

In Islam, the practice of focused surrender reflects the qualities of the theta state: deep presence, inner silence, and connection with the Divine. Theta waves are most active during the following states:

1. Prayer (Namaz/Salah) & Zikr (Remembrance)

During acts of sincere worship such as prayers (namaz), Zikr (remembrance), and silent contemplation, the human brain often transitions into the theta wave state, a rhythm associated with deep relaxation, spiritual connection, and subconscious awareness.

In this state, the mind becomes calm yet alert, and the heart becomes more receptive. Repetitive movements in prayer, the rhythmic recitation of verses, and the focused remembrance of Allah (SWT) all serve to quiet the external noise and gently lead the brain away from beta (busy thinking) into the slower, more reflective theta frequency. This is not merely a mental shift, but a profound neurological opening, one that allows for emotional healing, intuitive insight, and a sense of divine closeness.

Many individuals report moments of peace, inspiration, or even tears during their salah or zikr, and science supports this: theta waves are present during such deep states of inner connection. In these moments, the soul and the brain align, opening a space where worship is no longer just ritual, it becomes presence, healing, and transcendence.

2. Hypnotherapy & Guided Imagery

In the practice of hypnotherapy and guided imagery, the theta brainwave plays a central role. Theta waves are slow brainwaves, typically ranging from 4 to 8 Hz, and are associated with deep relaxation, heightened suggestibility, vivid imagery, and access to the subconscious mind. When a person enters a theta state, often through deep relaxation, or hypnotic induction, they become more open to healing suggestions, emotional release, and inner transformation. In this state, the analytical mind softens, allowing buried memories, suppressed emotions, and limiting beliefs to rise

gently to the surface where they can be restructured or released. Guided imagery, when delivered in this theta state, becomes far more effective because the subconscious mind, rich in symbols and metaphors responds powerfully to imagined scenes and sensory experiences. In this state, creativity, intuition, and emotional processing are enhanced, allowing the mind to integrate experiences and insights more deeply.

3.Slow Rhythmic Breathing –

Most of us breathe without awareness, shallow, quick breaths that rise and fall in the chest. Slow rhythmic breathing is a mindful practice that combines deep breathing with pulmonary (diaphragmatic) breathing to optimize oxygen intake and promote relaxation.

Pulmonary breathing, also known as deep diaphragmatic breathing, involves a more conscious and natural pattern: as we inhale, the diaphragm moves downward and the stomach gently expands outward; as we exhale, the stomach contracts inward. This full engagement of the lungs allows for greater oxygen exchange and activates the parasympathetic nervous system, bringing calm and clarity to the mind. When practiced regularly, pulmonary breathing becomes a powerful tool to counter hedonic adaptation, the tendency of the mind to quickly adapt to pleasure and seek more stimulation.

By slowing down our breath, we slow down our thoughts. We reconnect with the present moment, develop sensitivity to simple joys, and build emotional resilience. Rather than constantly chasing new highs, this practice helps us find satisfaction in stillness.

Example,

- Box Breathing - You inhale slowly for a count of four, hold the breath for a count of four, exhale slowly for a count of four, and then hold again for a count of four before repeating the cycle. This balanced rhythm helps calm the mind, regulate the nervous system, and improve focus and clarity.
- Alternate Nostril Breathing- In this technique you inhale through one nostril while closing the other, then exhaling through the opposite nostril in a controlled, rhythmic pattern. Typically, you use your thumb to close one nostril, inhale through the other, switch nostrils with your fingers, and exhale.
- Coherent Breathing -This is a breathing technique in which the breath is intentionally slowed and balanced, typically around 5–6 breaths per minute, with equal lengths of inhalation and exhalation.

These techniques regulate the autonomic nervous system, enhance lung function & shifts brain activity from the restless Alpha state into the calm, miraculous theta wave state.

4. Early Morning Silence (Tahajjud Time)

Allah's Messenger (S.A.W) said, "Our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, comes every night down on the nearest Heaven to us when the last third of the night remains, saying: "Is there anyone to invoke Me, so that I may respond to invocation? Is there anyone to ask Me, so that I may grant him his request? Is there anyone seeking My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?" Sahih al-Bukhari

The early hours before sunrise hold a sacred stillness, when the world is calm, distractions fade, and our inner self is

more easily reached. During this serene window, the brain naturally begins to shift from the slower delta waves of deep sleep into the gentle, dreamlike rhythm of theta waves. This transition makes early morning silence an especially fertile time for Zikr(remembrance of Allah), prayer, and self-reflection.

Brain waves are not merely electrical activity, they are gateways into different states of being. Beta sharpens the mind, Alpha relaxes it, Delta restores the body, and Gamma integrates insight. But it is Theta that whispers to the soul. Whether reached through prayer, meditation(remembrance of Allah) , or therapeutic trance, theta is the forgotten gateway — the state where we heal, remember, and reconnect. In its silence, the heart softens, the mind reorganizes, and the spirit feels its nearness to Allah. To rediscover theta is to rediscover stillness. And to rediscover stillness is to rediscover ourselves.

The Subconscious Mind: The Silent Power Behind Your Actions

Beneath your conscious awareness, below the thoughts you're actively thinking lies a vast, silent force: your subconscious mind. It's like the operating system of your inner world, quietly running in the background, shaping your emotions, habits, and decisions without asking for permission. Unlike the conscious mind, the part you're using right now to read, analyze, and think, the subconscious operates beneath the surface, quietly influencing your behaviors, beliefs, memory, fears, emotions, habits, intuition, desires, and perceptions. Most of what we think, feel, and do each day is not determined solely by logic or conscious choice ; it is largely driven by what's stored in the subconscious.

Dr. Milton H. Erickson (1901–1980) – founder of Modern Hypnotherapy. At age 17, Erickson was struck with a severe case of polio that left him almost completely paralyzed. Doctors believed he would not recover for the whole life. He was confined to a bed, unable to move or speak clearly.

While lying in bed unable to move, Erickson began observing the slight muscle movements in his body and learned to mentally rehearse physical movements. He began visualizing himself walking, moving, and performing physical actions in his mind. He also began using self-hypnosis, directing his subconscious mind to reconnect and rebuild neural pathways.

Over time, these mental rehearsals were believed to have stimulated neuroplasticity (the brain's ability to reorganize and form new connections). Eventually, he regained mobility, first using a cane, and later was able to walk with minimal assistance.

Later, He went on to become one of the most influential figures in hypnotherapy and psychotherapy, creating Ericksonian Hypnosis, a more permissive, indirect form of therapy. His personal healing journey became foundational for mind-body medicine.

How Theta waves shape the the Subconscious Mind in Early Childhood

Theta waves are dominant in early childhood because the developing brain is highly plastic, receptive, and imaginative. This promotes learning, memory formation, emotional processing, and creativity. As children grow, alpha and beta activity gradually increase, supporting focused attention and higher-order cognitive skills.

In the early years of childhood, your subconscious absorbs parents' beliefs, cultural and religious ideas, emotional patterns, external messages about money, love, safety, and self-worth as imprints(experiences). These early imprints become the "default programming" of your subconscious.

The subconscious mind does not distinguish between logical and illogical experiences. Whatever you go through, good or bad, becomes recorded and programmed within it.

Unless this programming is consciously changed, it continues to influence your thoughts, emotions, and actions well into adulthood, often without your awareness.

Imagine someone who feels anxious in elevators. They might not remember that as a child they were once stuck in one, but the subconscious remembers. Every time they step into an elevator, their body reacts with fear: a racing heartbeat, sweaty palms, the urge to escape.

They may say, "I do not know why this happens to me."

But the subconscious knows. It is trying to protect them based on old and outdated programming. Unless that fear is gently addressed and reprogrammed, it will continue to shape their reactions, regardless of logic or reason.

Why the Subconscious Matters

Your subconscious mind does not only influence your mood or habits, it also shapes the way you experience your entire reality. If you have ever repeated the same mistakes, struggled with money or relationships, or felt stuck despite trying hard to change, it is often because your subconscious beliefs are not aligned with your conscious intentions.

For example:

You consciously want success, but subconsciously hold the belief, “I am not good enough, and it is not possible for me to be successful.

This subconscious belief may arise from early experiences, repeated messages, or learned patterns that you may not even be aware of. As a result, even when you consciously take steps toward your goals, your subconscious can create self-sabotaging thoughts, doubts, or behaviors, subtly steering you away from opportunities. This disconnect between conscious intentions and subconscious programming explains why you might struggle to achieve what you want despite your efforts. Understanding and consciously reprogramming these subconscious beliefs is essential for aligning your intentions with your reality, unlocking your full potential, and achieving lasting personal growth.

Early comments and labels

If a child repeatedly struggles to learn something new like reading, writing, math, or even a skill like cycling , and instead of receiving encouragement, they hear comments such as:

“You can never do this.”

“You are not smart enough.”

“Why do you always fail?”

These statements reflect an all-or-none communication style, where adults label the child as always good or never good, rather than guiding them with patience and understanding.

Children do not evaluate these statements logically. They simply absorb them as truth, and over time, these words form subconscious beliefs that continue to shape their thinking and self-perception in adulthood.

Impressions that shape self-esteem and self-image

A child's self-esteem develops largely from how they are spoken to and treated. Comments from parents, teachers, relatives, and even peers create powerful impressions. These impressions influence how a child begins to see themselves:

"I am capable,"

or "I am a problem,"

"People believe in me,"

or "People think I am not enough."

Even small but repeated remarks about intelligence, appearance, behavior, or ability can leave lasting marks. The subconscious absorbs these impressions as part of the child's self-image, which later becomes the lens through which they experience adulthood.

A person may not consciously remember these moments, but the subconscious stores every emotional imprint. As a result, old beliefs continue to shape confidence, choices, and reactions long after childhood, influencing behaviors in Adult life.

Accessing and Reprogramming the Subconscious

The good news is that your subconscious mind is programmable and it naturally wants to help you. You can begin to reshape limiting beliefs through practices such as

meditation, affirmations, visualization, hypnosis, spiritual practices, and journaling. The key is to enter a relaxed or receptive state, such as the Alpha or Theta brainwave state, when the subconscious is more open to suggestion. These states often occur just before sleep or immediately after waking.

Your subconscious mind acts like a faithful servant, responding exactly to the patterns and beliefs you have imprinted in it. By consciously working with it, you tap into the hidden engine behind your thoughts, emotions, healing, and personal transformation.

Change does not begin with sheer willpower; it begins with awareness of your subconscious programming. When you update the inner script, your life naturally begins to reflect those changes.

“The Untapped Power of the Mind: Natural Anesthesia in History”

Before chloroform, ether, or general anesthesia ever existed, pain was an unavoidable companion of surgery. Yet, in the early 19th century, a Scottish surgeon named Dr. James Esdaile made history in India by performing over 300 major surgeries painlessly, using hypnosis as the only anesthetic.

Dr. James Esdaile was a British physician (1808–1859) posted in Calcutta, India. He became intrigued by the practice of mesmerism (an early form of hypnosis). While other surgeons operated with no pain relief (often causing trauma or death), Esdaile began experimenting with inductions of deep trance to dull or eliminate pain.

His patients underwent amputations, tumor removals, scrotal surgeries for hydrocele and elephantiasis, and even

delicate cataract operations — all without chemical anesthesia.

The results were extraordinary. Esdaile reported over 300 successful surgeries performed under hypnosis. At a time when surgical mortality rates hovered around 50% , due largely to shock, pain, and infection , his outcomes improved dramatically, with death rates falling to just 5–10%. Patients remained relaxed, immobile, and largely pain-free. Even more striking, their healing was faster and post-surgical complications were significantly reduced.

Why It Worked :

In deep hypnotic trance, the brain shows increased theta activity, associated with focused attention and heightened suggestibility. In this state:

- Pain perception centers in the brain are dulled or shut off.
- Muscles deeply relax, reducing stress and shock.
- Breathing slows, blood pressure stabilizes, and the body enters a state of calm detachment.

With heightened suggestibility, the mind accepts instructions such as:

- “This part of your body is numb.”
- “Your body is calm and still.”

Today, neuroscience has confirmed what Esdaile intuitively practiced nearly two centuries ago. Brain imaging studies show that hypnosis alters activity in the anterior cingulate cortex and thalamus—key regions involved in pain perception. However, Hypnosis can significantly reduce pain perception, calm the mind, and stabilize physiological responses, but it cannot fully replace chemical anesthesia in modern surgical practice.

CHAPTER 9

The Psychology of Language: The Impact of Words

"Not a word does he utter but there is an observer by him ready (to record it)."

—*Surah Qaf, (50:18)*

Language is powerful. It shapes how we think, feel, and connect. Words are not mere symbols; they are vessels of thought, emotion, and identity. Words psychology is the study of how words shape our minds, influence behaviour, and affect perception.

Words shape perception and influence behaviour. They form the lens through which we interpret reality. Every word you speak or hear carries energy, either calming or chaotic, healing or harmful. By consciously choosing our words, both in how we speak to others and in our inner dialogue, we take control of the very neural pathways that shape who we become.

The psychology of words begins with meaning but extends far beyond it. Modern neuroscience reveals that positive words activate motivational centres in the brain, increasing optimism, resilience, and self-worth. Conversely, negative words stimulate the amygdala, releasing stress hormones like cortisol, which can create anxiety or emotional pain.

Thus, our inner and outer dialogues hold immense psychological power.

The Prophet Muhammad(SAW) said:

“Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak what is good or remain silent.”

(Sahih al-Bukhari & Sahih Muslim)

Islam encourages words of peace, words of truth, and words of encouragement, all of which nurture mental harmony, strengthen relationships, and build compassionate communities.

In psychological terms, this is the essence of mindful communication, using language consciously, with emotional awareness and ethical responsibility.

When we speak with kindness, we not only heal others but also purify our own hearts. Positive speech releases inner contentment, much like gratitude does. On the other hand, harsh words, gossip, or sarcasm darken the heart and disturb emotional equilibrium.

Nowadays, there is a rise of cool language dressed in style. Words with harsh or even vulgar meanings are now called “cool” or “savage.” People laugh when someone insults another cleverly. It’s called roasting, dark humour, or just being real. But we forget: a sharp tongue leaves deep scars. What once would be considered disrespectful is now often admired as cool & confidence

We are losing the art of graceful communication in modern times. We are losing sensitivity. And above all, we are losing the ability to express ourselves with truth, clarity, and kindness.

Let us take a moment to reflect. and guide each other that powerful speech is not an arrogant or cool speech. Genuine emotion is not a passing trend, and language is not just for sounding smart, but for understanding, healing, and building bridges between hearts.

“A person may utter a word pleasing to Allah... and Allah raises his rank...”

“A person may utter a word displeasing to Allah... and it throws him into the Fire.”

(Sahih al-Bukhārī)

Zikr(remembrance of Allah) and Speech

“Whoever loves to meet Allah, Allah loves to meet him; and whoever hates to meet Allah, Allah hates to meet him.”

— Sahih Muslim

The words of remembrance are the medicine of the soul and brain.

Taking time in private for worship and reflection strengthens the heart, as remembrance of Allah brings tranquility, and sincere devotion in seclusion was practiced and encouraged by the Prophet Muhammad(SAW).

The Prophet Muhammad(SAW) said:

“Seven are shaded by Allah in His shade on the Day when there is no shade except His: a just ruler; a young person who grows up in the worship of Allah; a person whose heart is attached to the mosque; two people who love each other for the sake of Allah, meeting and parting upon that; a man who is called by a woman of status and beauty and he says, ‘I fear Allah’; a person who gives charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given; and a person who remembers Allah in seclusion

and his eyes overflow with tears.” — Sahih al-Bukhari & Sahih Muslim

Allah(SWT) says: ‘O son of Adam, devote yourself to My worship, and I will fill your heart with contentment and take care of your poverty; but if you do not do that, then I will fill your heart with worldly concerns and will not take care of your poverty.’”
Sunan Ibn Majah

Zikr (remembrance of Allah) is one of the most powerful forms of mindful speech in Islam. It transforms the tongue, purifies the heart, and regulates the inner emotional world. While modern psychology studies how words shape thought and behaviour, Islam has long emphasized over 1400 years ago that the words we speak, and especially the words we repeat through dhikr, shape the state of the soul

Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find rest.”

— *Surah Ar-Ra’d (13:28).*

Everyday speech can be reactive, unfiltered, or even harmful, often driven by emotion or stress. Zikr, however, represents elevated speech, words chosen with purpose, humility, and awareness.

“A believer does not insult, curse, or speak harshly.” — Sahih Muslim

When the tongue is trained in Zikr, harmful patterns of speech naturally weaken:

idle talk reduces

anger-driven words decrease

judgmental or negative language becomes less frequent

This purification of speech directly influences mental clarity and emotional balance.

Zikr is rooted in a deep spiritual anchor providing stability, presence and a continuous connection to Allah(SWT).

Each repetition brings you:

Out of the past (regret)

Away from the future (anxiety)

Into the moment (presence with Allah)

From a psychological perspective, reciting Zikr reduces rumination, lowers anxiety, and interrupts negative self-talk. The rhythmic nature of dhikr calms the autonomic nervous system, reduces cortisol, and fosters emotional regulation similar to therapeutic grounding techniques.

Psychology teaches that internal speech—self-talk—shapes identity and emotional well-being. Zikr transforms inner dialogue from fear-based or self-critical thoughts to thoughts grounded in trust (tawakkul), gratitude, and hope.

Instead of thoughts like:

“I cannot handle this,”

the heart learns to say:

“Allah is with me.”

This shift from self-centred thinking to Creator-Centred grounding builds resilience and spiritual confidence

Speech and Formative years

In context of child psychology, words are the earliest emotional imprints on a child’s developing mind. From the very beginning, a child absorbs the tone, rhythm, and intention behind words long before understanding their literal meanings. Every word spoken to a child becomes

part of their inner narrative, shaping how they perceive themselves and the world around them.

During early development, the child's mind functions like fertile soil, whatever is sown through language takes root deeply. Words of affection, encouragement, and appreciation nurture confidence, empathy, and a sense of security. In contrast, harsh, dismissive, or judgmental words can create emotional wounds, cultivating patterns of fear, self-doubt, and insecurity that may continue into adulthood.

Children who often hear positive statements such as "You are a good boy," "You are intelligent," or "You are brave," begin to accept these words as part of their identity. In contrast, children who are repeatedly told "You are fearful," "You are weak," or "You are dumb," may internalize these labels as truth. Over time, these verbal impressions become the foundation of their self-image and emotional world.

Ultimately, words are not just sounds; they are forces that build or break the inner world of a child. Through mindful and compassionate speech, adults have the power to nurture emotionally strong, spiritually aware, and psychologically healthy generations.

Therefore, Word Psychology in both Islamic and psychological understanding teaches us that language is more than communication ; it is creation. Our words shape our perception of reality, influence our emotions, and reflect the state of our soul

The Misuse of Mental Health Terminology

It is so important to be mindful and precise with the language we use to describe our thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

In everyday conversations, psychological terms are often used loosely, far removed from their true clinical meanings. Sadness is frequently mislabelled as depression, and normal worry or stress is casually referred to as anxiety. A simple preference for cleanliness or order is often mistaken for OCD (Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder), while typical fears are exaggerated and called phobias. When someone experiences occasional mood swings, they're hastily labelled as bipolar, and a person who is simply confident or practices healthy self-love may be unfairly labelled a narcissist. Yet, by casually using these serious terms, we unknowingly blur the lines between normal human condition and real psychological disorders

Mental health professionals use diagnostic criteria, based on frequency, duration, intensity, and level of impairment, to diagnose the Psychological disorders. They are serious disorders that need therapy, medication, or professional care.

Misusing the clinical terms not only diminishes the seriousness of real mental health conditions but also spreads misinformation and stigma. Words carry power, they shape how we think, how we relate to others, and how we perceive ourselves. Using psychological terms accurately is essential for fostering empathy, promoting mental health awareness, and respecting those who live with such conditions.

The Power of Words

The power of Words is invisible, yet their effects are deeply felt. Neuroscience and psychology have both confirmed this: "Words can literally change the brain".

1.Words Trigger Emotions

Words trigger emotions and sensations. They matter more than we realize. Imagine two people walking across the road. one feels the heat, the other doesn't. But the moment one says, 'It's too hot,' the other person starts to feel the heat too. That is the power of words. They don't just describe reality; they influence perception, and can even alter our physical experience.

2.The Neuroscience of Language

When we hear or read words, the brain processes them through a network involving the Broca's area (speech production), Wernicke's area (language comprehension), and the limbic system (emotional processing).

Positive, encouraging words activate the brain's reward pathways, releasing dopamine and serotonin, which enhance motivation and well-being. Negative, critical words can activate the amygdala, triggering stress responses and releasing cortisol, which can impair learning, memory, and emotional stability over time.

3.Words, the Subconscious Mind, and Neuroplasticity

Subconscious mind does not differentiate between reality and repeated suggestion or between reality and imagination. . When a phrase is repeated often enough, the brain treats it as truth and encodes it into belief systems. This is why children who are repeatedly told “you are intelligent” often internalize confidence, while those repeatedly told “you are lazy” may carry that label as part of their identity for life even if they don't own the laziness trait in actual sense.

Neuroscience confirms that the brain is plastic — its neural pathways can change with repeated experience. Words, when repeated over time, create neural grooves that strengthen certain thought patterns. One of the mind's rules is that repeated messages from the outside world tend to get accepted and stored deeply. For instance, if a child constantly hears “you are lazy,” “You can’t do anything right,” for little things, this repetition imprints on their subconscious and gradually shapes their self-image and personality. The mind absorbs repeated words like truth. A confident adult or a broken one often has roots in the words they heard growing up. Even in adulthood, repeated exposure to degrading or mocking language can lead to self-doubt or low self-esteem. Similarly, being spoken to with kindness and encouragement fosters inner strength and mental resilience.

4. Words Shape Relationships

Every relationship is built on the foundation of words. Words can build trust or break it. We don't just hear words; we replay them in our minds. A single sentence can be remembered for a lifetime, either as a scar or a source of strength. Our subconscious mind remembers emotional language more than neutral facts. People often say, “I’ll never forget what he said to me.” It’s not the event itself, but the words that linger in the heart.

6. Words Affect Physiological Health

Words can profoundly influence physiological health. Studies have shown that verbal abuse, harsh criticism, or persistent negative language can be as damaging as physical abuse.

Children exposed to frequent shouting or chronic stress may develop heightened anxiety, altered stress responses, and sometimes delayed cognitive development. In adults, constant exposure to negative speech or hostility can lead to chronic stress, which elevates cortisol levels, weakens the immune system, increases inflammation, and contributes to cardiovascular problems.

Positive language, on the other hand, can have protective effects. Supportive, affirming, and kind words have been shown to reduce stress hormone levels, improve heart rate variability, and enhance immune function. Even brief expressions of gratitude or encouragement can activate neural circuits associated with reward and well-being. This demonstrates that language is not merely symbolic—it has a direct physiological impact, shaping both mental and bodily health.

Listening to Understand vs. Listening to Reply with

In most daily conversations, we don't truly listen at first. Instead, we wait for the other person to finish, not with the intention to understand, but to respond with our own point of view. We often sympathize (feeling sorry for someone) but rarely do we empathize (seeing the situation from their perspective).

A therapist, on the other hand, is trained differently. They are taught to listen with empathy, not ego. Their role isn't to speak, judge, or relate everything to themselves. Instead, they create a space where the other person feels safe, heard, and understood. A therapist listens beneath the surface — to the tone, the pauses, the unsaid emotions. Their understanding comes not from assumption, but from clarity, and presence.

When someone shares their pain, a regular person might say:

"You're over thinking !"

"Just move on!" or

"It happens to everyone"

A therapist, however, might say:

"It sounds like you're carrying a lot. It must be overwhelming . Tell me more."

This difference in approach is powerful.

Not everyone needs advice; sometimes, people just need to be heard. Listening without interruption, and without judgement, allows emotions to unfold naturally. It tells the other person: "You matter. You are heard".

Good communicators and therapists are aware of these perception differences. They practice empathetic listening, and try to understand the world from the other person's point of view, not just their own.

If we all practiced even a little of this therapist-style listening; our relationships would deepen, and our conversations would heal rather than leave us feel misunderstood.

Mind on Paper and Screen

Writing is more than putting words together. It's a mental workout that reflects how we think, remember, and feel. The act of writing, whether on paper or screen, activates multiple regions of the brain, turning thoughts into visible form.

- Writing by hand

When you write by hand, the brain is deeply engaged. The simple pressure of the thumb and forefinger triggers sensory feedback that strengthens neural connections

Writing by hand activates up to 80% of the brain:

- Motor cortex controls the movement of the hand.
- Somatosensory cortex provides touch and grip.
- Visual cortex guides what we see on the page.
- Hippocampus encodes long-term memory.
- Prefrontal cortex manages attention and higher thinking.

All of this makes handwriting a powerful tool for focus, understanding, and memory.

Handwriting engages fine motor skills, spatial awareness, and the brain's reticular activating system, which sharpens focus. It slows thought, making it reflective and emotionally resonant.

Studies show handwriting improves memory encoding and conceptual understanding compared to typing. (Mangen & Velay, 2010)

- Writing on a screen / typing

Typing, by contrast, offers speed and efficiency. It also motor and language centres of brain but provides less sensory feedback. Because it allows for rapid transcription, typing often leads to surface-level processing: words may flow quickly, but retention is weaker compared to handwriting.

Typing accelerates thought, encourages structure and promotes digital fluency. It suits clarity, speed, and multitasking.

Research shows that typing can still support learning and thought organization, but some studies suggest handwriting enhances memory and cognitive processing more than typing.

- Writing as Cognitive Processing

Writing organizes mental clutter. It doesn't just capture ideas—it reprocesses them.

Psychologist James Pennebaker's research on expressive writing shows that journaling can lower anxiety, boost immunity, and help people process trauma. Writing becomes a safe container where raw emotions turn into structured thought, giving the brain space to heal and make sense of experience.

- Digital vs. Analog: Medium Shapes the Message

The medium you choose influences not just how you write, but what you write.

- Typing on screens (phones, tablets, laptops) encourages brevity, multitasking, and instant communication.
- Writing on paper fosters mindfulness, slower reflection, and emotional depth.

Neuroscience insight: Writing by hand engages sensorimotor memory—you remember more of what you physically write than what you type.

- The Psychological Benefits of Journaling

Whether typed or handwritten, journaling provides:

- Clarity of thought and emotion
- Support for decision-making and problem-solving
- Relief from mental overload (a “mental detox”)
- Growth in self-awareness and emotional regulation

Research confirms:

- Handwriting improves learning and memory, especially for students.
- Brain scans show greater neural activity with handwriting compared to typing.
- Writing by hand enhances conceptual understanding, while typing often leads to verbatim copy
- Handwriting Analysis: Personality on Paper

Handwriting is often described as “brainwriting”, an outward projection of inner states. The way we form letters, the pressure of the pen, spacing, and slant all offer insights into personality, emotions, and even unconscious thought. While graphology is debated in scientific circles, many therapists and psychologists acknowledge that handwriting can reveal patterns of stress, mood, and temperament.

Common Interpretations in Handwriting Analysis:

- Slant: Right slant suggests openness and sociability, while left slant may indicate introversion or caution.
- Size of Writing: Large letters often reflect confidence or extroversion, while very small letters suggest focus, concentration, or introversion.

- **Pressure:** Heavy pressure shows emotional intensity and determination, while light pressure indicates sensitivity or fatigue.
- **Spacing:** Wide spacing between words may suggest independence, while cramped spacing can indicate a need for closeness or anxiety.
- **Baseline:** Writing that ascends may reflect optimism, while descending lines may signal fatigue or discouragement.

Therapeutic Insight:

Handwriting exercises are sometimes used in therapy to improve focus, calm anxiety, or even reshape negative thought patterns. By intentionally slowing down and writing with awareness, people can influence not only their clarity of thought but also their emotional regulation.

CHAPTER 10

Emotion Focused Therapy

“Some emotions are a gift, while others are a test”

What Are Emotions?

Emotions are among the greatest signs of Allah subḥānahu wa taālā’s wisdom embedded within the human nature. Love, attachment, anger, jealousy, fear, sadness, hatred, hope, compassion, gratitude, shame, guilt, joy, and other emotions are not random, or man-made; they are purposely placed within us by Allah(SWT).

Just as positive emotions carry purpose , every negative emotion also serves a divine intention. These subtle inner stirrings are signals, messages, and guides. For example, when something goes wrong, anger arise to alert the mind that a boundary has been crossed or that one’s integrity needs protection. But within that same emotion lies a choice: to use it in a healthy, principled way or to allow it to spill into harm.

It is our response, our awareness, our discipline, and our taqwā that determine whether an emotion becomes a means of elevation or a cause of regret.

Emotions are complex psychological and physiological states that are triggered by internal thoughts or external events. They are deeply connected to the body through the nervous system and often result in physical sensations like a racing heart during anxiety, or tightness in the chest

when experiencing grief. Emotions are meant to be acknowledged, felt and processed, but when they're suppressed or stored in the body (especially through trauma), they can manifest as physical pain, illness, chronic tension, or emotional dysregulation.

Emotions are internal experiences that arise in response to events, while emotional responses are how we express or manage those feelings through thoughts, behaviors, or physiological changes. Emotional responses can be:

Expressive (like crying, smiling, frowning),

Cognitive (thoughts or interpretations triggered by emotion),

Physiological (heart rate increase, sweating, tension),

Behavioral (actions taken based on emotion — withdrawing, confronting, helping).

Understanding the types of emotional responses helps us gain insight into not just what we feel, but how we handle those emotions and whether those responses are healthy, suppressed, exaggerated, or well-regulated.

Parenting Your Emotions

I discovered a new element in my practice – “Parenting Your Difficult Emotions.”

A parent usually has two kinds of children: one who brings pride and another who may cause concern or embarrassment. Positive emotions are like the well-behaved child, while negative emotions resemble the difficult child, loud, demanding, and hard to handle. The more we try to avoid these emotions, the louder they get,

just like a nagging child calling for attention until you listen to them.

Ways to handle Difficult/ Negative emotions:

1.Acknowledge – We all feel good about ourselves when we experience positive emotions like happiness, joy, pride. But when we encounter negative emotions like anger, sadness, fear, jealousy or we often feel uncomfortable, or unsettled, It's important to recognize that these negative emotions are a natural part of every human psyche. The more we deny their presence or push them away, the louder they will shout. You are not different, damaged, or broken for feeling them. Acknowledging their presence is the first step toward understanding and managing them.

When you feel emotionally weak, honestly turn inward and tell to yourself: "I am feeling emotionally weak, and this is what I am experiencing." This doesn't mean you should sink into the emotion or let it overpower you. It simply means acknowledging it—recognizing what is present without running from it or fighting it.

2.Accept – Just as a loving parent accept their mischievous child as a part of themselves, as someone who belong to them no matter what, learn to accept your negative emotions in the same way Its okay to accept them but its not okay to act on them impulsively.

3.Respond, don't react –A reaction happens automatically, often without thought, while a response involves pause, reflection, and conscious choice. Reactions are impulsive, driven by immediate emotions, whereas responses allow us to act in alignment with our values and intentions.

Your negative emotions may push you toward reckless actions, just like a child demanding candy without realizing

it will harm their teeth. That urge is a reaction, not a decision or a response. But as a parent you always have a : you can guide conscious choice to respond towards healthier options instead

Similarly, as the “parent” of your emotions, you have the choice: whether to give in impulsively or to your emotions toward healthier, more constructive responses.

4.Redirect –

- After you have acknowledged, accepted, and consciously responded to your emotions, the final step is to redirect your energy and focus toward something meaningful—such as a small achievable goal, a creative task, or a form of halal recreation. Activities like sports, volunteering, or creative expression refresh the heart without sin. Refocus on your body by engaging in physical activity and reconnecting with your physical sensations. Whether it is yoga, walking, or any form of exercise, feel your heartbeat, your nerves, and your breath.
- Take a moment to reflect on the bigger picture: the transient nature of this life, the reality that our time here is limited, the truth that the past is gone, and that tomorrow is never guaranteed. We walk through moments of joy and seasons of deep pain, yet none of these remain with us when we eventually depart from this world. We leave everything behind except our deeds and the patience we carried through difficult times.
- Draw strength from the lives of the Prophets and the steadfastness of their Taqwa.

- Surround yourself with people who uplift you spiritually, morally, and psychologically, allowing their presence to support your growth.

By consistently practicing the steps of acknowledge, accept, respond, and redirect, difficult emotions can be calmed, and compulsive reactions gradually give way to healthier, lasting habits.

Anger Mechanism and Amygdala Hijack: A Deeper Understanding

Islam teaches us that while anger is natural, how we respond to it determines whether it becomes a means of reward or a cause of sin. Uncontrolled anger leads to regret, harsh words, broken relationships, and injustice. Controlled anger leads to wisdom, patience, and strength of character.

Allah(SWT) praises those who control their anger, saying:

“Those who spend(in Allah’s cause) in prosperity and in adversity, and those who restrain anger, and pardon people and Allah loves the doers of good.” (Al-‘Imran 3: 134)

Anger is a test for a believer, a measure of how well one can exercise patience, self-restraint, and wisdom in challenging situations. The true measure of a believer lies not in feeling anger, but in how you respond to it with , thoughtfulness, and justice. By managing anger wisely, you transform it from a potentially destructive force into a guide for righteous action and personal growth.

Inside our brain is a small structure called the amygdala, which functions as our emotional alarm system. Normally, when we encounter something, signals travel from the eyes to the thalamus, then to the visual cortex, where the brain

analyses meaning and decides on an appropriate response. However, the brain also has a shortcut: some signals travel directly from the thalamus to the amygdala, triggering an emotional response before the thinking brain has time to fully understand what is happening.

This quick reaction is called an amygdala hijack. In these moments, we may suddenly feel angry and act impulsively, shouting, saying hurtful words, or reacting aggressively. Once the anger passes, we often regret what we did or said.

Why Does This Happen More to Some People?

Some people are more prone to amygdala hijack if:

They have lived through trauma or hardship

They are frustrated or stressed most of the time

They have long suppressed their emotions

They grew up surrounded by individuals with poor coping skills

Generational Anger: The Inherited Fire

For some people, anger is not always a fleeting reaction to the present moment; it runs deeper, like an unspoken current flowing through generations. Just as we inherit physical trait such as eye color, we also inherit emotional responses.

Modern research in epigenetics shows that unresolved trauma, anger, fear, and chronic stress can leave marks on how our genes function. These changes do not alter our DNA itself but can influence how we respond to stress. A grandparent who endured hardship or consistently suppressed anger may unknowingly pass on heightened stress responses to their children and grandchildren.

The result can be a family line where tempers run short, frustration simmers beneath the surface, and anger feels almost built-in. Understanding this helps us realize that poor anger management skills are not always an individual's fault, but may stem from generational patterns.

By consciously changing how we respond to anger today, we not only transform our own emotional patterns but also create healthier emotional imprints that can positively influence future generations.

Learned Behavior and Emotional Modeling

More commonly, anger is inherited through emotional modelling. Children unconsciously absorb the emotional language of their environment. If a parent frequently yells, shames, or lashes out in frustration, the child learns that anger is the primary way to communicate distress or unmet needs. They internalize this behavior as normal, even if it's harmful. This modelled anger becomes generational programming:

The Hidden Cost of Generational Rage

What appears to be a family legacy of illness may in fact stem from a legacy of unprocessed emotions. Unresolved anger is not only emotionally draining, it is physiologically damaging. Chronic anger has been linked to:

High blood pressure and heart conditions

Chronic inflammation

Sleep disturbances

Autoimmune responses and hormonal imbalances

Digestive issues, such as ulcers or irritable bowel syndrome

Headaches and migraines

Increased risk of stroke

Mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and irritability

Impaired cognitive function, such as difficulty concentrating or memory problems

Breaking the Chain: A Path to Healing

The good news is that generational patterns are not permanent. With intention, awareness, and healing, you choose to respond differently, interrupting the cycle of inherited anger and emotional reactivity.

1.Acknowledge the Pattern

The first step is to recognize the pattern. Understand that the anger, frustration, or emotional reactivity you carry may not have started with you. It could be inherited pain, passed down silently and unconsciously through generations. By acknowledging this, you create the awareness needed to break free, taking responsibility not for the origin of the anger, but for how you choose to respond and transform it in your own life.

2.Heal Through Awareness

Anger can either destroy or transform, depending on how aware we are in the moment. The goal is not to suppress anger, but to understand and channel it wisely. The moment you feel heat rising within—tightness in the chest, a faster heartbeat, tense muscles—acknowledge: “I am feeling angry.” Awareness begins by naming the emotion without judgment.

The Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) advised: “If one of you becomes angry while standing, let him sit; if sitting, let him lie down.” – Sunan Abu Dawud

This pause interrupts the chain reaction. Take slow, deep breaths. Imagine the breath cooling the heat inside you. This simple act calms the nervous system and allows your mind to think instead of react.

Tools such as Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT), Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT), Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), group anger management programs, breathwork, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), and clinical hypnotherapy can help individuals regulate their nervous system, process difficult emotions and reduce the physical and physiological tension associated with stored anger.

3.Create Emotional Safety

You cannot heal anger in an environment where you are constantly triggered, dismissed, or belittled. Emotional safety allows the nervous system to soften its defenses and begin trusting connection again. A key part of this healing is learning to notice your emotional triggers and choosing thoughtful, constructive ways to respond. Over time, consistent awareness and intentional responses form new habits that gently replace automatic, inherited reactions. This is how healthier emotional patterns are created—through safety, consciousness, and the courageous decision to respond differently than what was modeled for you.

In other words, you learn to become the person you needed, instead of repeating the patterns you witnessed.

4. Ancestral and Spiritual Work

Prophet Muhammad(SAW) said- “The strong person is not the one who fights others, but the one who controls himself when angry.”(Sahih al- Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

Ancestral and spiritual work can help relieve generational anger by connecting you to practices that heal both your own heart and the emotional burdens of those who came before you. Through prayer, meditation, journaling, and intentional forgiveness, you create space to release trapped anger and inherited pain.

These practices cultivate awareness, compassion, and emotional regulation, allowing you to break cycles of reactivity. In doing so, you not only heal yourself but also lighten the weight carried by your ancestors, creating a calmer, healthier legacy for future generations.

Emotional Freedom Techniques (EFT)

EFT, or Emotional Freedom Techniques often called “tapping”, is a psychophysiological acupressure practice that blends modern psychology with ancient Chinese acupressure. It involves gently tapping on specific meridian points on the body while focusing on an emotional issue, traumatic memory, or limiting belief. This helps reduce the emotional intensity tied to that issue, bringing about calmness, clarity, and resolution.

At its core, EFT is a form of energy psychology that aims to balance the body’s energy system and neutralize negative emotional charges. Developed by Gary Craig in the 1990s, EFT evolved from Thought Field Therapy (TFT) but was simplified into a single, easy-to-learn method. Craig’s central belief was: “The cause of all

negative emotion is a disruption in the body's energy system."

Over 100 clinical studies and several meta-analyses have validated EFT's effectiveness. Research shows that EFT:

- Reduces cortisol levels
- Improves symptoms of anxiety, depression, and PTSD(Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)
- Increases happiness and wellbeing
- Creates long-lasting emotional shifts, often faster than traditional therapy

Studies by Dawson Church, Peta Stapleton, and others confirm its efficacy, especially for trauma healing and emotional resilience. EFT has been shown to provide relief for:

- Anxiety and stress
- Phobias and fears (e.g., public speaking, flying)
- Trauma and PTSD
- Physical pain (headaches, muscle pain)
- Addictions and cravings
- Depression, guilt, grief, and shame
- Self-esteem and confidence issues

At its core, Emotional Freedom Technique(EFT) is not just a technique. It is a doorway to understanding, processing, and releasing emotions that have weighed us down for a very long time. By consciously connecting with our feelings while gently stimulating the body's energy points, we create space for clarity, calm, and healing. EFT empowers us to break free from old emotional patterns, to respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively, and to

reclaim control over our inner world. With consistent practice, it fosters self-compassion, and emotional balance. It teaches us that lasting change starts from within, and by nurturing our inner emotional landscape, we not only heal ourselves but also radiate calm, and clarity, into every interaction and relationship in our lives.

CHAPTER 11

The Brain's lens and Neural Web

The Three Filters of the Brain: How We Experience Reality

The human brain doesn't register reality exactly as it happens. Instead, it filters every experience through three powerful lenses that shape our perceptions, reactions, and core beliefs. These filters are:

1. Deletion

Our brain is constantly bombarded with millions of bits of information every second — sounds, sights, smells, thoughts, and sensations. To avoid overwhelm, the brain deletes a large portion of this input. It chooses only what it thinks is important at the moment, based on past experiences and current focus.

Example:

You may be in a room full of people talking, yet only hear the voice of someone calling your name. Your brain naturally deletes the background chatter and highlights what truly matters to you. (General Selective Attention)

Now, imagine a colleague sharing negative talk about a mutual friend. At first, the words linger in your mind. But then you pause and reflect:

“This information doesn't help me grow, solve a problem, or uplift anyone's life. I choose to let it go.” Each time the gossip resurfaces in your mind, you gently guide your

attention back to your goals, the present moment, and fear of Allah (SWT), refraining from thinking negatively about the mutual friend(Ignoring Negative talk)

Deleting gossip isn't an automatic process. It is a conscious choice. It means choosing to protect your mental energy, your intentions, and your spiritual well being. With steady practice, this way of responding becomes natural, an automatic, graceful pattern that arises whenever a similar situation appears.

In Islam, guarding the tongue and heart from harmful speech is not only encouraged; it is an act of worship.

Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) Said:

“Whoever believes in Allah (SWT) and the Last Day, let him speak good or remain silent.” —Sahih al Bukhari and Sahih Muslim

By consciously choosing what to delete, you make space for what truly uplifts the soul: sincerity, compassion, and peace.

2. Distortion

The brain often distorts information to fit our existing beliefs or emotions. This helps us make sense of things quickly, but it can also lead to biased thinking or misinterpretation.

Example:

When you're upset, a simple frown or neutral glance from someone else can feel like a personal attack. This happens because our brain can twist reality to fit how we feel.

Another example is how a person's beliefs or perceptions can color everything they see . A woman may act with kindness and good intentions, yet a relative who has already decided she is 'wrong' or 'negative' will interpret her actions through that lens. No matter what she does, her behavior is twisted to fit their personal beliefs, rather than being recognized for what it truly is.

However, there are exceptions. Sometimes hearts do change, and perspectives shift, especially if Allah (SWT) wills. In general, when struggling with inner bias, the best approach is to refrain from biased thinking and, Instead, focus on being empathetic: put yourself in the other person's shoes and view the world from their perspective, not yours. Only then can you truly understand.

3. Generalization

To make learning and decision-making easier, the brain generalizes. It takes one or two experiences and applies them broadly. While this helps us navigate life efficiently, it can also limit growth if the generalizations are negative or false.

Example:

Imagine a student who tries a new sport, like tennis, for the first time and loses badly. They might think, "I'm terrible at sports," even though its only their first attempt. One small failure can turn into a generalized belief about themselves.

Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance (Leon Festinger, 1957) is a psychological state that occurs when a person experiences

conflicting thoughts, beliefs, or attitudes, especially when their behaviors conflicts with their beliefs.

Example:

Imagine a person who considers themselves a health-conscious individual but smokes cigarettes. When confronted with evidence that smoking is harmful, they experience cognitive dissonance because their behavior (smoking) conflicts with their belief (valuing health).

To reduce this discomfort, they might:

Reject the information: “Those studies are exaggerated; smoking isn’t that bad.”

Rationalize: “I only smoke occasionally, so it won’t hurt me.”

Deny responsibility: “Everyone dies from something eventually; it’s not really my fault.”

When information from the outside world enters our awareness, it first passes through the conscious mind, the part of our mental processing that actively thinks, analyzes, and evaluates in the present moment. Here, we become aware of the information and can choose to focus on it or ignore it.

Next, the information encounters the critical mind (sometimes called the critical faculty or critical filter). This is the place where cognitive dissonance occurs. The critical mind compares incoming information with our inbuilt beliefs, values, and past experiences. If the information aligns with these internal values, the person accepts and retains it. If it conflicts, the person often rejects, rationalizes, or outright denies it in order to preserve

mental consistency and avoid the discomfort of cognitive dissonance.

Lastly, Once the information passes through the critical mind, it enters the subconscious mind, where it is stored as part of our mental programming. Here, it becomes embedded in our automatic thoughts, emotional patterns, and behavioral responses, often influencing our actions long after we consciously forget where the information came from.

Interesting Facts about Cognitive Dissonance:

1. Your Brain Doesn't Like Conflict

The human brain is wired to seek consistency. When there's a mismatch between belief and behaviour (e.g., "I value health" but "I smoke"), the brain experiences discomfort and tries to resolve it, either by changing the behavior or justifying it by continue smoking.

2. We Lie to Ourselves More Than We Think

People unconsciously adjust their beliefs to align with their actions. For example, someone who cheats on a test may later say, "Everyone else does it," or "It was just one time," to reduce the inner conflict. Here, introspection plays a vital role. Often, we find ourselves doing things simply because others are doing them. This is known as the bandwagon effect — a psychological tendency where people adopt certain behaviors, styles, or beliefs just because they're popular or widely accepted. But what everyone is doing isn't always right. Just because something is common doesn't mean it's correct. To live with purpose and authenticity, we must pause, reflect, and ask ourselves why we're doing and what we're doing. True

clarity and direction come only when we look inward and examine our own thoughts, beliefs, and intentions. Only then can we break free from mindless conformity and begin to generate fresh, meaningful insights.

3. Dissonance Can Be a Motivator for Change

This discomfort often becomes a powerful force for wiser transformation. Take an example of a man who smokes regularly but also deeply values health. He tells his children the importance of healthy living, eats healthy food, and even encourages others to stay away from harmful habits. But every time he lights a cigarette, a voice inside reminds him that his actions are contradicting his values.

This inner tension creates discomfort. He starts to feel guilty, especially when his children watch him or when he coughs at night and fears long-term illness. The dissonance between “I care about my health” and “I am doing something that harms me” begins to grow. Eventually, that discomfort pushes him to consider quitting.

The more he reflects, the wider that gap grows between who he is and who he wants to be. That growing discomfort becomes the catalyst for change. Eventually, he takes the step to stop smoking. He may struggle, relapse, or need several attempts, but each effort strengthens the seed of transformation that was planted by that very unease. Over time, persistence nurtures lasting change, showing that discomfort is often the beginning of growth.

Another example, where a woman who deeply values honesty and integrity. She believes in being truthful in all aspects of life. However, she finds herself lying in social situations to avoid conflict or to please others. Deep down, this behavior bothers her. She feels uneasy, even guilty,

because it contradicts her core belief in truthfulness. That inner discomfort, the cognitive dissonance doesn't let her rest. It may not change her overnight, but it plants a seed. She starts reflecting on her actions, and seek guidance from Allah(SWT). Gradually, she begins to speak more truthfully, even if it feels uncomfortable at first. The shift happens because her heart and mind were no longer in harmony. Thus, cognitive dissonance is be a blessing, if we truly reflect and intend for a change.

4.Marketers Use It to Influence Us

Advertising often creates dissonance: “If you care about your family, you’ll buy this healthy cereal.” This makes people feel guilty or inconsistent, nudging them to buy just to resolve the internal conflict.

5.Relates to Morality and Hypocrisy

When people preach values they don’t follow, they either suffer dissonance or justify their behavior by rationalizing: “I had no choice” or “This was an exception.”

Cognitive dissonance isn't just a psychological phenomenon, it often reveals deep moral and spiritual struggles within us. When our actions conflict with our moral or spiritual values, the inner discomfort we feel is more than just mental tension; it's a sign that we are not in harmony with what we know to be right.

This is where hidden hypocrisy can quietly creep in. We may claim to live by certain values like honesty, patience, prayer, humility, but our actions may not always reflect them. The human heart knows this imbalance. And when we ignore it, that inner dissonance grows. If left unaddressed, it can lead to spiritual numbness, guilt, or

even a false sense of righteousness. But here's the beauty: Cognitive dissonance becomes divine mercy, a sign from the Creator that something within us needs realignment. It's a gentle inner nudge from Allah(SWT), a whisper reminding us: "You say you believe, now live that belief."

Example:

Imagine someone who regularly prays, fasts, and speaks about the importance of Islamic values. Outwardly, they seem devout. Yet privately, they might engage in envy, jealousy, cheat in business, or harbor pride. Deep inside, they feel a sense of unrest. Their soul senses the gap between who they appear to be and who they truly are. This inner discomfort is cognitive dissonance—a subtle reminder from Allah (SWT). If the person reflects sincerely and strives to close this gap, that discomfort transforms into a powerful path toward sincerity, humility, and genuine submission.

In this way, cognitive dissonance, when faced honestly can be a door from hypocrisy to transformation. It is Almighty Allah's mercy that we feel this discomfort, because without it, we may never change.

6. It's a Universal Human Experience

Cognitive dissonance is a universal human experience, indicating it is a fundamental aspect of how humans process contradictions (conflicting beliefs and experiences), and how they resolve it. Moral values, subconscious & unconscious experiences, learned knowledge, & self reflection play a vital role whether to choose the right one for a good cause or justify with the bad one & turn our hearts away from the righteous path.

Cognitive Distortions: The Lies We Tell Ourselves Without Realizing

Imagine wearing a pair of dirty glasses. Everything you see is still there, but now it looks darker, uglier, or more threatening than it really is. That's what cognitive distortions do to your thoughts. They color your inner world with fear, shame, or hopelessness, even when reality is far more balanced or hopeful. And they can affect anyone, no matter how strong, smart, or spiritual they are.

Why Do Cognitive Distortions Form?

Our brain is designed to protect us. When we go through emotional pain, rejection, failure, or fear, the brain creates shortcuts to avoid future suffering. It is often developed as coping mechanisms in childhood or during stress. The brain uses them to simplify decisions or protect us emotionally, but over time, they become habitual and unhelpful. These shortcuts, over time, become rigid thinking patterns. But what once helped us survive may now stop us from living fully. Understanding cognitive distortions helps us pause, reflect, and reframe(change)our thoughts in healthier, more realistic ways.

What Do They Sound Like?

Cognitive distortions often speak in the voice of our inner critic. Here's how they sound:

"I always mess things up."

"No one cares about me."

"If one person rejects me, I'm unlovable."

These thoughts are not facts. They are mental habits, and they can be unlearned.

The Most Common Distortions as follows :-

1. All-or-Nothing Thinking

Also called black-and-white thinking. You see life in extremes, success or failure, good or bad, love or rejection.

Impact: Creates pressure, perfectionism, and shame.

Example: Imagine a person whose partner forgets to call them one evening. They might think, “If they loved me, they would never forget to call. They must not care about me at all.”

Instead of seeing the situation realistically, that everyone can be busy or forgetful, they interpret it in black and white terms: either complete love or complete indifference.

2. Overgeneralization

You take a single event or limited experience and applies it broadly in an exaggerated or extreme way, often leading to inaccurate or negative beliefs.

Impact: Hopelessness, victim mentality.

Example: “I failed this test, I’ll never succeed at anything.”

3. Mental Filtering

You focus only on the negatives and block out the positives, like wearing negativity glasses.

Impact: Chronic dissatisfaction and low self-esteem.

Example: “They praised my work, but all I can remember is that one criticism.”

4. Catastrophizing

You expect the worst to happen, no matter how small the issue.

Impact: Anxiety, avoidance, fear-based living.

Example: "I made a mistake, I'll probably lose my job."

5. Emotional Reasoning

You believe something is true because you feel it deeply, even if there's no evidence.

Impact: Emotional instability and confusion.

Example: I feel incompetent, so I'm not capable of handling this task."

6. Personalization

You blame yourself for things beyond your control, or assume others' actions are about you.

Impact: Guilt, shame, and damaged relationships.

Example: "She's upset, I must have done something wrong."

7. Should Statements

You create rigid rules for yourself and others ,leading to constant pressure and judgment.

Impact: Guilt, frustration, perfectionism.

Example: "I should never feel tired. I must always be active

Cognitive Dissonance Vs Cognitive Distortions

Distortions = errors in thinking (irrational patterns), twist reality negatively. Example, 'I always fail at everything'.

Dissonance = conflict between belief and behavior (mental discomfort) leads to justification or change. Example, 'Smoking is bad, but I smoke'.

Brains Are Interlinked

Human beings are deeply interconnected through well-documented psychological and biological mechanisms. Research shows that emotions can spread from one person to another through facial expressions, tone of voice, body language, and neural mirroring processes. Because our brains are constantly reading and responding to the emotional cues of others, the emotional environment we are in can strongly shape our mood, thoughts, and even our stress levels, sometimes without us realizing it. This is why our emotional environment can be just as influential as our physical one.

When you visit a spiritual place, like a mosque, you often feel calm, uplifted, or energized, even without speaking a word. This is not a coincidence; it is the collective emotional and spiritual energy of the people and their prayers that fills the space. Your mind and body respond to the atmosphere and the focused presence around you, creating a sense of peace and harmony.

Another example, When you meet a kind and attentive doctor, your pain often feels better even before taking any medicine. This is similar to the placebo effect, where the brain responds positively simply because it expects healing. The comfort, care, and hope offered by the doctor activate the brain's social synchrony, helping the body relax and

begin to heal, showing how powerful belief and connection can be in the healing process.

Yet, the same interlinking happens in negative ways too. When you spend time with those who constantly complain, worry, or speak with a harsh or hopeless tone, their mindset begins to influence your own thinking patterns. You may start to feel drained, anxious, or pessimistic. This is due to mirror neurons and emotional contagion, well-established phenomena in neuroscience, where our brain unconsciously mirrors(copy) others' emotional states.

Islam beautifully addresses this principle. Allah (SWT)instructs us to keep company with the righteous and avoid gatherings that lead us away from truth and inner peace.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said, "A man follows the religion of his close friend, so each of you should look at whom he takes as a friend."

In both psychology and spirituality, the message is the same:

Your mind is shaped by the company you keep

Your heart is influenced by the energy you absorb from the environment.

Choose environments and people that uplift your soul, heal your mind, and align you with truth.

The Interlinked Nature of Brains in the Placebo Effect

The placebo effect is far more than a quirk of medical research; it is a profound testament to the interconnectedness of human minds. At its core, the placebo response demonstrates that what we believe, expect, or emotionally invest in can bring about real,

measurable changes in our physiology. But the effect is not isolated to an individual's belief system alone. Scientific and therapeutic observations increasingly show that the beliefs and expectations of others—doctors, therapists, caregivers—can influence a patient's response. This suggests that brains are not only self-regulating units but also part of a larger web of psychological and energetic communication.

For example, when a doctor conveys genuine confidence in a treatment, even if it is inert, the patient is more likely to respond positively. Similarly, group healing intentions, compassionate presence, or empathic resonance between practitioner and patient can enhance the placebo response. This is where neuroscience begins to overlap with fields like energy psychology and spiritual healing. Mirror neurons, empathy circuits, and subtle energetic fields suggest that our brains “talk” to each other, often beneath conscious awareness.

Take for example a landmark study in Parkinson's disease, where patients who received a saline injection (a placebo) showed measurable improvement in motor function. This wasn't due to any active ingredient, but rather their expectation of relief, reinforced by the confidence of the doctor administering the injection. Brain scans showed that their brains actually released dopamine, the same neurotransmitter that Parkinson's medication is designed to increase. The belief of the patient, combined with the belief of the medical team, triggered a real biological change.

This shows that healing isn't only about the medicine itself, it also depends on trust, perception, empathy, and suggestion. Our brains pick up on the emotions and intentions of others, and in response, they can trigger the

body's own healing mechanisms. The placebo effect, in this sense, is a shared phenomenon: minds and bodies are connected not just to our own beliefs, but also to the beliefs and intentions of those around us.

CHAPTER 12

Digital Dominance: A Growing Threat to Humanity

In today's world, digital technology has transformed both our homes and workplaces, making communication faster, tasks more efficient, and daily life more convenient. From staying connected with loved ones to managing work with smart tools, technology has undeniably improved how we live and operate. Yet, this very dominance also brings serious drawbacks. Excessive screen time weakens real human connections, blurs work-life boundaries, and affects our mental and physical health. While digital tools offer great advantages, their overuse poses growing threats to the quality of our relationships, balance, and overall well-being.

As our dependence on digital devices grows, so does the need to understand their impact on our well-being. Health concerns related to prolonged exposure to digital devices are increasingly alarming. Radiation emitted by smartphones, laptops, and Wi-Fi signals, though often low-level, accumulates with heavy usage. Some emerging studies suggest that EMFs may:

- Alter calcium ion channels in brain cells (neurons)
- Disrupt neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine
- Affect sleep cycles and mood regulation.

Beyond radiation, excessive screen time contributes to eye strain, poor posture, and disrupted circadian rhythms, ultimately leading to chronic fatigue, reduced concentration, and an overall decline in physical health. Constant exposure to digital signals and uninterrupted internet connectivity also affects the emotional landscape of the brain. The rapid pace of online content—notifications, messages, and continuous stimulation keeps the brain in a heightened state of alertness. Over time, this can increase emotional sensitivity, making individuals more reactive, anxious, or easily overwhelmed. The brain's reward systems, shaped by instant access to information and social validation, become conditioned to seek constant digital engagement. As a result, tolerance for silence, patience, and deep emotional processing gradually weakens, affecting how we respond to stress and navigate our relationships.

In addition, the rise of online work has drastically reshaped the nature of physical labor. While digital platforms offer convenience, speed, and high efficiency, they have also overshadowed many forms of manual work. Tasks that once required physical effort, hands-on skill, or face-to-face interaction are now performed with a few clicks. Although this shift enhances productivity, it reduces opportunities for physical movement, craftsmanship, and the sense of accomplishment that comes from tangible work. As a result, people often experience greater sedentary lifestyles, reduced physical activity, and a growing disconnect from practical, real-world skills.

Relationships suffer significantly under the weight of digital saturation. While technology allows us to stay connected across distances, it often reduces the quality and depth of our human interactions. Virtual communication lacks the emotional richness of face-to-face encounters,

causing feelings of loneliness, misunderstanding, and social disconnection.

The human brain was never designed for constant digital input. Yet the internet floods it with rapid images, endless scrolling, nonstop notifications, and emotionally charged content. This overstimulation directly impacts the limbic system, the brain's emotional center of brain, especially the amygdala, which governs fear, anxiety, and emotional reactivity. For example: A man spent hours scrolling through his phone — consuming disturbing news updates, intense videos, and endless headlines. His mind was overwhelmed, constantly reacting to fear, anger, and anxiety stirred up by what he was consuming.

At that moment, his 8-year-old son walked in and innocently asked, “Papa, can you help me fix my toy?”

The father snapped, “Can’t you see I’m busy? Go play somewhere else!”

The child silently walked away, hurt and confused. Later, the father realized his outburst had nothing to do with his son’s small request. It was the result of mental overload from excessive digital stimulation. His mind had no space left for patience or gentleness.

Furthermore, social media platforms are designed to activate the brain’s dopamine reward circuits. Likes, shares, and feedback trigger short bursts of dopamine, training the brain to seek external validation.

Over time, this rewires emotional regulation and leads to:

- Increased sensitivity to rejection
- Emotional dependency on online feedback
- Anxiety when disconnected, or even when the phone battery is low

- Emotional fragility, as comfort and validation are increasingly sought from the digital world instead of real human relationships

Moreover, entertainment itself has become heavily screen-centered, further reducing opportunities for physical interaction and active play. Activities that once encouraged creativity, outdoor movement, and social bonding are increasingly replaced by digital games, social media, and streaming platforms. Even reading, which was traditionally a peaceful, physical activity, has shifted to digital devices such as tablets and e-books, contributing to increased eye strain. While digital reading is convenient, it cannot replicate the sensory comfort of holding a physical book. This trend is also visible in education, where traditional chalkboards/ markerboards and printed materials are rapidly being replaced by smart boards and digital classrooms. Although modern learning tools offer efficiency, they increase screen exposure among children and limit opportunities for hands-on, tactile learning.

Together, these factors highlight how unchecked digital dominance can threaten the fundamental aspects of human life. To preserve our well-being, it is crucial to cultivate mindful digital habits, protect our interpersonal relationships, and create boundaries that safeguard our physical and mental health.

The Dopamine Trap

At present times, mobile phones have become more than just communication tools, they are now constant companions. For many children and youth, these devices are not merely accessories but extensions of their very identity. What begins as casual use quickly spirals into

compulsive behavior, driven by powerful neurochemical forces within the brain, particularly the dopamine compulsion loop.

Dopamine is a neurotransmitter often associated with pleasure and reward. However, its true role is not in creating pleasure but in motivating us to seek pleasure. Each notification ding, social media like, game win, or message triggers a dopamine release, reinforcing the behavior and creating an urge to repeat it. Over time, this forms a loop:

Trigger → Anticipation → Dopamine Release → Temporary Satisfaction → Craving for More

The brain becomes wired to anticipate rewards, and when that anticipation is fulfilled by mobile interactions, it strengthens the habit. This loop mimics the neurological patterns seen in other forms of addiction like gambling, nicotine, or sugar.

Children and teenagers are especially vulnerable due to their developing brains and lack of mature impulse control mechanisms. The prefrontal cortex, responsible for decision-making, self-regulation, and future planning, is still under construction during adolescence. This makes it harder for them to break free from the dopamine loop.

People today are constantly entertained but increasingly emotionally empty. With just a tap on their electronic device, they access a universe of videos, games, messages, memes, and social platforms, all carefully designed to capture attention and keep them hooked. Behind this addiction lies a powerful neurochemical called dopamine, a substance that fuels both pleasure and the craving for more. But what seems like fun on the surface often conceals a deep

psychological paradox: The more connected individuals are online, the lonelier they feel offline.

What is Dopamine, Really?

Dopamine is often called the “feel-good” chemical, but in truth, it’s not just about pleasure. It’s about anticipation, motivation, and reward-seeking behavior. Every time a person gets a notification, a like on a post, a win in a game, or a new video suggestion, dopamine is released. It’s not the reward itself that pulls them in, but the anticipation of the next one. You might have noticed that people often check their phones throughout the day, after waking up, before going to bed, and in between tasks.

Digital platforms use this cycle for their own advantage, keeping users engaged through their apps and websites.

Trigger → Dopamine spike → Satisfaction → Craving for repetition

The brain learns that scrolling, tapping, or playing leads to momentary happiness and begins to demand it more frequently. While dopamine gives a short-lived sense of joy, it can also pull people away from real human interaction, emotional depth, and meaningful relationships. Research shows that excessive screen use is linked to poorer emotional regulation, people become more dependent on their devices to manage stress or negative feelings. Constant digital engagement is also associated with higher levels of anxiety and depression.

As dopamine draws individuals deeper into the screen, they may gradually lose the interest or ability to engage in real-life conversations. Loneliness increases, social anxiety grows, and many begin to feel that they don’t “fit in”

anymore , not realizing that it is their excessive screen time that is disconnecting them from the real world.

Emotional Numbness

Constant dopamine stimulation desensitizes the brain. Over time, simple pleasures like going outside, talking to someone , reading a book, and spending time in Solitude feels boring. They are no longer enough to “hit” the reward system. This leads to emotional flatness, and boredom.

Over time, this overexposure can heighten emotional sensitivity. Individuals may find themselves easily overwhelmed by conflict, criticism, or even minor frustrations. Small disagreements can trigger disproportionate stress, and feelings of sadness, anger, or anxiety, may linger longer than before. Emotional regulation becomes harder because the brain, accustomed to constant digital stimulation and instant dopamine rewards, struggles to cope with real-world unpredictability.

Quality time with children and grandchildren is compromised for the sake of screen time. Time spent with older adults is equivalent to studying numerous books, for their experiences hold a lifetime of wisdom.

Partners sit next to each other, yet are oceans apart mentally, and emotionally. We know our phones better than we know our spouses.

Routine sounds like background chatter, seems unbearable and intrusive, amplifying the sense of overload. This can lead to mood swings, irritability, and a lower threshold for emotional triggers, making everyday interactions feel exhausting or draining, all consequences of excessive screen time.

We capture moments for social media but forget to live them in our hearts.

Our greatest poverty today is the poverty of presence.

We are here, yet not really here. Our bodies sit together, but our minds wander elsewhere.

This isn't just disconnection. It is replacement. Human bonds are being outcompeted by artificial ones.

Screen Affection Isn't Human Affection

"A heart that clings to screens so bright

Slowly loses its inner(heart) light."

Technology has no soul. No mercy. It does not weep with you, nor hold you when you are breaking. It doesn't understand your silence or heal your pain. It gives you dopamine, not devotion. It entertains you, but it doesn't understand you. It connects your devices, yet disconnects your hearts.

A Wake-Up Call

Questions we must ask ourselves:

Is this the life we truly wanted?

Is this the present and future we desire for our children?

Now, It is time to reclaim what we have lost.

Reclaim our time.

Reclaim our presence.

Reclaim our bonds.

Technology was meant to serve us, not enslave us.

The Forgotten Medicine: Stepping Outside

At a time when anxiety, depression, and emotional fatigue are rising to unprecedented levels, nature is more essential than ever.

Nature is not just scenery; it is medicine. It soothes without words. It heals without cost. Sunlight stimulates serotonin, calming the restless mind. A walk through greenery reduces cortisol, the body's stress hormone. Birdsongs, rustling leaves, and open skies reset a cluttered mind more effectively than any app or screen ever could.

Modern life pulls us inward, into screens, into routines, into ourselves. Healing, however, pulls us outward, into the real world, into open air, into the gentle presence of nature.

But instead, many of us now live sealed inside air-conditioned spaces: office cubicles, high-rise apartments, shopping malls, and enclosed cars. These environments keep us cool and comfortable, but they also cut us off from the natural rhythms of the world. Breathing recycled air for long periods leaves us mentally foggy, emotionally drained, restless, and irritable.

The wisdom is simple yet profound: step outside, touch the earth. breathe deeply. And let nature remind you of what still matters.

Fresh air is not just pleasant; it is powerful. Its higher oxygen content clears the mind, reduces fatigue, improves concentration, and lifts mood. Time outdoors interrupts cycles of overthinking and rumination, helping the nervous system shift from stress mode into rest and recovery. Even a few deep breaths in natural air can calm anxiety far better than hours of over-analysis indoors.

And when sunlight joins fresh air, the benefits multiply. Together, they act as natural antidepressants, raising serotonin, balancing hormones, strengthening circadian rhythms, improving sleep, and fueling the body with Vitamin D. The combination of sky, air, and light is one of the oldest and most effective medicines we have, freely available and endlessly abundant.

In a world of screens and sealed rooms, we must remember: nature is not optional. It is vital. It is the forgotten medicine waiting just outside our doors.

CHAPTER 13

Heart and Hearth – A Test of Patience and a Path to Reward

“Nobody is perfect. Not you. Not them. The bond of family is sacred, and the Creator has commanded us to honor it, even when it feels difficult.”

Human life is woven together by the threads of relationships, each carrying its own unique colors of love, care, and responsibility. From the bonds of family to the companionship of friends, and the sacred union of marriage, relationships shape our hearts, guide our actions, and reflect the divine wisdom in human connections.

Relationships are one of the greatest tests and blessings in life. We all navigate our flaws, weaknesses, and emotional limitations. There will be moments when perceptions clash, when people interpret the same situation differently, and when certain behaviors feel unbearable. It’s human to need space. It’s allowed to take space, to pause, and to protect your emotional well-being, but it is not allowed to sever the ties of kinship. Allah(SWT), in His infinite wisdom, knows how relationships can hurt us. Yet, He also knows their power to refine our character and elevate our souls.

“So would you perhaps, if you turned away, spread corruption on earth and sever your ties of kinship? Those are the ones whom Allah(SWT) has cursed, so He deafened them and blinded their vision” —Surah Muhammad (47:22-23)

Family is not just a social structure, it's a spiritual training ground. In the way we treat our ties, we show our obedience to the Creator more than we realize. Whoever works to safeguard this sacred bond of relationships will be rewarded by Allah(SWT). Anyone who contributes to peace, understanding, and stability between people is participating in an act that Allah loves. But whoever tries to damage the relationship, stir conflicts, or sow jealousy, envy, or suspicion, will be held accountable on the Day of Judgment.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

"Shall I not tell you what is better than fasting, prayer, and charity?"

They said, "Yes, O Messenger of Allah."

He said: "Reconciling between people, for causing division between people is the cutter (i.e., it cuts off the religion)." -Sunan Abu Dawud.

This hadith teaches us that bringing people together and resolving conflicts is a noble act, while division between people is sinful.

Forgive others with the same compassion and sincerity that you hope to receive from Allah(SWT) for your deeds. Forgiveness may not always change others, but it may always change you. And that change is seen and rewarded by the One who sees everything.

"The one who maintains ties is not the one who reciprocates, but the one who keeps trying even when the other cuts him off."(Sahih al-Bukhari)

The Discipline of the Mind in Islam: The Wisdom of Leaving What Does Not Concern Us

Allah (SWT) has honored the human being with intellect—the ability to observe, reflect, analyze, and understand. This intellect is a great blessing. Yet every blessing requires discipline. When the mind is left unchecked, it no longer remains a source of wisdom; instead, it becomes a source of anxiety, doubt, and inner unrest.

In our daily lives, some people often experience this struggle of undisciplined mind. For example, someone enters a room to discuss a personal matter with another person. A neutral individual neither invited nor involved, immediately begins to speculate: Why did they come? What was their intention? What are they saying, and did they really mean what they said? Why was it said in that tone? What did that gesture mean? Slowly, the mind moves from ignorance to suspicion, and investigation.

Especially within home, families and close relationships, the discipline of the mind becomes essential. When affection exists, the heart becomes sensitive, and the mind can easily overstep its limits.

Abu Huraira (RA) reported: The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (SAW) said, “Among the perfection of one’s Islam is to leave what does not concern him.”

A person to improve their Islam is to leave that what does not concern them. Do not ask about or pry into matters what Allah (SWT) has not placed within your responsibility. The struggles, private matters, and unspoken burdens of others are not for you to uncover or interrogate.

“A strong person builds himself by leaving that which does not concern him. Do not enter areas that are not your business. Do not ask about things that are not your concern. Anything in life...People’s problems and people’s secrets—do not pry into them. If you are not invited, do not ask. You call someone (twice, thrice) and they do not answer—That’s it. Do not keep asking. You knocked on a persons door and they did not answer. You knew they’re inside, they did not answer—walk away with your dignity. And do not talk about it. This is their right, not yours. This is the character of a high-value person. Watch how your life becomes healthier, how you sleep better, and how happier you’ll be.” — Bilal Assad.

Ego- The Silent force that harms relationship

“O Allah (SWT), do not burden me with an ego so overpowering that it shows me nothing but myself.”

To the People, who finds themselves entangled in bitterness think back to the time when your relationship once held hope, positivity, joy, and peace. It simply needs to be remembered. You are not your harsh words. You are not your pride. You are not the grudge you carry. You are a soul designed for mercy, forgiveness, and light. The ego burdens the soul, magnifies pain, and clouds perception. Let go of its weight, and reclaim the clarity and peace that are truly yours.

A Heart-Centered Approach to Relationships -

1. Be honest, not harsh. Express your concerns without cruelty.
2. Be humble, not helpless. You’re not giving in, you’re rising above.

3. Set boundaries, not walls. Create space without severing love.
4. Pray for peace, not punishment. Ask the Creator to heal what you cannot.
5. Do not always focus on what others have done to you. Turn your attention inward. Watch your own actions, intentions, and your own heart.
6. Choose kindness. Return to your essence.

The Noise of the World, and the Silence of Understanding

Not every silence needs to be filled with words. Not every argument requires a rebuttal. Not every disagreement demands a winner. Sometimes, choosing peace is far more powerful than proving a point.

Conversations are many, but sincere intentions are few. People may speak with charm, offer smiles, and use beautiful words in public, yet carry resentment, jealousy, or ill will within their hearts. This contradiction—where the tongue says what the heart does not believe—is deeply disliked by Allah (SWT). Words lose their meaning when intentions are impure.

Therefore, be transparent. Be honest. If you choose to speak kindly, let your kindness be genuine. Let your smile come from a sincere heart. Do not pollute your soul by living in duality, presenting goodness outwardly while concealing bitterness within. Such inner conflict erodes a person's character more than any external flaw. It is far better to remain silent from someone you are not comfortable with than to pretend with polite words while harbouring resentment inside. Relationships flourish in honesty, not performance.

Some ignorance is wisdom in relationships. Selective ignorance is the maturity to understand that not everything deserves a reaction. Constant correction, over-analysis, and emotional hypervigilance exhaust the heart and strain human connection. Real relationships see the human behind the words and the heart behind the struggle.

Our faith places enormous importance on the dignity and preservation of relationships. One of the most powerful teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) regarding this is: “The mercy of Allah does not descend upon a people among whom is one who severs ties of kinship.” — Sahih Muslim

This profound warning teaches us that almost everything in life may be negotiable, differences of opinion, misunderstandings, mistakes—but breaking ties, straining relationships, or causing division is not permissible in the sight of Allah (SWT).

Marital relationships

Human beings are naturally drawn to companionship, seeking comfort, understanding, and support in one another. Among all the bonds that connect us, there is none as intimate and profound as the union of two hearts in marriage. Marriage (Nikah) in Islam is more than a social or legal arrangement; it is a sacred covenant that involves emotional, psychological, and spiritual dimensions. The Quran describes marriage as a means of tranquility, affection and mercy:

“And among His signs is that He created for you spouses from among yourselves so that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy.” — Surah Ar-Rum (30:21)

In the Qur'an, the word "love" is not explicitly used by Allah (SWT) when describing marriage. Instead, Allah (SWT) emphasizes qualities that sustain a lifelong partnership:

Mawaddah – affection, and emotional warmth between spouses.

Rahmah – mercy, and kindness that help couples support each other through life's challenges.

Sukoon – tranquility and peace, reflecting the calm a spouse brings.

Love by itself is not enough to sustain a meaningful, lasting relationship. Real enduring connection, the kind that survives life's trials, requires more than love. It needs forgiveness, mercy and affection.

In Islam, certain relationships are unbreakable by nature like blood relations, son remains a son to his mother, and a sister remains a sister to her sibling, regardless of circumstances. These blood ties cannot be severed, as commanded by Allah (SWT). However, the bond between a husband and wife is different. Only marriage carries both the blessing of union and the lawful option of separation. Therefore, marital relationships requires continuous care, patience, compassion, and nurturing to truly thrive. An effective relationship calls for patience when things don't go your way, forgiveness when mistakes happen, and constant nurturing even in difficult times.

It is our collective responsibility as a society to reconcile differences rather fuel division. When disputes arise between a husband and wife, it is not about taking sides, whether one belong to the husband's family or the wife's. our role is to safeguard the marital tie, not sabotage it.

“If you fear a breach between the two (the man and his wife), appoint (two) arbiters, one from his family and the other from hers; if they wish for peace, Allah will cause their reconciliation. Allah knows all, is well aware of everything”- Surah An-Nisa (4:35).

This verse clearly establishes that Allah has entrusted families and society with the role of reconciliation – a responsibility that must be carried out with great care, wisdom and conscious restraint.

Key Psychological concepts in Marriage:

1. Couple and Family Alignment – Team work

A healthy marriage and family environment is built when couples present a united front, demonstrating mutual respect, cooperation, and teamwork in both marital and parenting decisions. Handling disagreements collaboratively—focusing on shared problem-solving rather than individual wins, strengthens the marital bond while providing children with a clear model of constructive conflict resolution, emotional security, and cooperation. Research shows that couples who maintain this team-based approach experience higher marital satisfaction, trust, and stability, while children benefit from observing supportive parents who work together as a unit, learning important social and emotional skills in the process.

2 WE- based communication approach

The way couples frame their communication reinforces unity and collaboration in marriage and parenting. Using inclusive, partnership-focused language emphasizes shared effort, cooperation, and mutual support. Phrases such as “We’ll figure this out together,” “We both have valid

points; let's find a compromise," or "Our family matters to both of us; let's decide together" help couples approach challenges as a united front rather than as individuals. Research indicates that couples who consistently use "we-focused" language strengthen marital cohesion, model cooperative problem-solving for children, and improve conflict resolution outcomes.

3. Handling Disputes Privately

"They are clothing for you and you are clothing for them"
— Surah Al-Baqarah(2: 187)

The Qur'an emphasizes that husband and wife are garments for one another, emphasizing that their dignity, protection, and mutual respect are of utmost importance.

Sometimes couples experience disagreements with one another, and it is important to handle those matters privately, safeguarding the dignity and trust within the relationship.

If external guidance is needed and the issue is not severe enough to involve family members, seeking advice from a neutral party such as a professional counselor or an impartial third party is far more effective. For instance, if a husband consults his family, the privacy of the couple may be breached over a trivial matter, and this threatens the dignity of both partners because family members are personally known to them. Moreover, the husband's family is likely to favor his perspective. Likewise, if a wife turns to her family, they are naturally inclined to support her side.

When both families become involved in a biased way, an additional conflict is added to the marital issue, posing a threat to the dignity of both partners. This creates further strain, as such involvement often intensifies disagreements,

turning a private marital matter into a broader dispute between families.

A neutral counselor, who is personally unknown to both spouses, offers unbiased perspectives that are more easily accepted and do not compromise the dignity of the couple. Constructive intervention ensures that disagreements are resolved respectfully, preserving both the relationship and mutual respect.

4. Sense of humor

A healthy sense of humor is a powerful tool in marital relationships. It lightens moments of tension, strengthens the emotional connection, and allows partners to navigate daily challenges with ease.

A healthy sense of humor is not about teasing or taunting under the guise of a joke. True humor is gentle and uplifting, it lightens the heart, and brings joy.

5. Vocalizing affection

The marital bond is unlike any other relationship, it demands continuous care and expression. While expressing affection is important in all relationships, in marriage it holds a special place. To truly experience the depth and beauty of marital bliss, couples must openly express their love.

Emotions are meant to be expressed—they are not something to be hidden or felt ashamed of. We express anger, disappointment, or displeasure openly: through our words, actions, or even silent gestures when we are upset with someone. Complaints are voiced without hesitation, and discontent is communicated without shame. But why

do we feel embarrassed to express love? Why do we hesitate to show affection?

This principle extends to children as well. Some parents believe that their actions—working, providing, and caring—are enough to show love. While actions matter, emotions are meant to be expressed, not hidden. Words of love and affirmation reinforce bonds and make relationships richer.

Unfortunately, in many communities, when a husband openly expresses love for his wife, others may frown or react disapprovingly. Similarly, when a wife vocalizes her affection for her husband, it is often met with guilt or subtle judgment. In such communities, when someone feels angry or frustrated, these unpleasant emotions are often expressed openly and are not viewed as shameful or inappropriate.

Yet paradoxically, when someone expresses affection or love, it is treated as an act of shame or guilt. This sends a confusing message to children who witness it, causing them to internalize the same patterns: negative emotions are openly tolerated, while positive expressions of care and affection are discouraged.

Hedonic Adaptation

It's a psychological phenomenon where people return to a stable level of happiness after positive or negative life changes. "Hedonic adaptation refers to, how people tend to return to their usual level of happiness soon after reaching a desired outcome." When you get something you once deeply desired—like a new phone, a promotion, a loving marriage, you initially feel a surge of joy. But over time,

your brain gets used to it. What once thrilled you becomes your "new normal."

Like the first spoon of ice cream, it's always the most exciting. But by the fourth or fifth bite, we're no longer tasting, we're just consuming. This is not failure. It's Hedonic Adaptation, a built-in feature of the human brain. This adaptation is part of how our brains are wired. It's a survival mechanism. If we stayed high or low all the time, we'd lose our ability to respond to life. But in modern times, it often traps us in a loop of "never enough."

In marriage, that means the excitement of togetherness, shared routines, and intimacy can dull, not because love has died, but because our minds naturally adapt. Even a short time apart can remind couples not to take each other for granted and can instill a sense of novelty. Absence creates space for emotional clarity and desire. This is one way to gently interrupt hedonic adaptation by creating intentional pauses that allow affection to be noticed again.

Imagine a couple who have been married for several years. Their daily routine has become predictable—morning coffee, school runs, work, dinner, and sleep. Over time, the excitement of early love seems to have faded. They care for each other, but the "spark" feels dull.

Then one day, the husband has to travel for a 5-day work trip.

During those few days apart:

The wife starts noticing his absence—his voice in the morning, his help with the kids, & undivided care whenever needed. The husband, too, feels her absence and companionship. They start sensing each other's silence & miss each other in ways they hadn't felt in months.

When he returns, that moment of reunion feels special. They talk more deeply that evening, even laugh about how much they missed the little things. That short separation broke the rhythm of routine. It reset their awareness and appreciation for one another. What had become background noise now feels fresh again.

The Problem in Hedonic Adaptation: Always Wanting More

We chase more success, more validation, more experiences.

We lose sensitivity to small joys because we are overstimulated.

Gratitude fades quickly as we habituate to things we once prayed for.

Social media fuels this by constantly presenting others' highlights, triggering a feeling of “not enough.”

The end result? We become numb to joy.

A life full of possessions but empty of presence & peace

The Solution in Hedonic Adaptation:

1. Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment with curiosity and non-judgment. It involves awareness of thoughts, feelings, sensations, and surroundings without getting caught in them.

Mindfulness helps break the cycle of hedonic adaptation. It's not about denying yourself pleasures. It's about slowing down and noticing them so you fully receive the joy before it slips away unnoticed.

For example, Eating Ice Cream Mindfully

Next time you eat something you love, try this:

- Pause. Take a breath before the first bite
- Engage all senses. Notice its color, texture, smell.
- Taste slowly. Focus only on the taste in your mouth — not your phone, not your thoughts.
- Appreciate. Whisper a short “Alhamdulillah” or “thank you” to the Creator.

When done right, even one small moment can leave a lasting sense of joy.

Mindfulness Deactivates the Default Mode Network:

Regular mindfulness practice (like breath awareness or body scans) reduces DMN activity, helping us stay anchored in the present.

Less mind-wandering = less comparison = less craving.

This interrupts the hedonic treadmill.

Strengthens Prefrontal Cortex:

Mindfulness activates the prefrontal cortex, the area responsible for emotional regulation, attention, and decision-making. This helps us respond rather than react to pleasure and pain.

Enhances Insula and Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC):

These areas help with body awareness and emotional monitoring.

Mindfulness increases connectivity in these areas, promoting greater emotional resilience.

2.Practice Gra1titude Regularly

Gratitude interrupts adaptation by helping you focus on what you already have, rather than constantly chasing more. Keep a gratitude journal — write 3 things daily you're thankful for. Express appreciation to people regularly (a thank-you message, a compliment, etc.)

Gratitude in positive psychology is not just about being thankful when life is easy—it's about cultivating a mindset of appreciation even in difficulty. The story of Prophet Ayyub (AS) stands as a timeless symbol of what true gratitude looks like: rooted in faith, not in circumstance. His story teaches us that gratitude is not only a virtue but a healing force—one that connects the soul to hope, meaning, and the Divine.

2. Variety and Novelty

Our brains adapt less when things change — variety keeps experiences from becoming stale. Switch routines: Try new hobbies, routes, or foods. Take short breaks from things you enjoy, so you can enjoy them more when you return. When we travel, we break out of routine and expose ourselves to new environments, cultures, tastes, and experiences. These unfamiliar settings stimulate our senses and refresh our perspective.

Human beings are naturally drawn to novelty. When we acquire something new like a shiny new car our brain releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter associated with pleasure and reward. This dopamine surge creates a feeling of excitement and satisfaction, making us feel temporarily happy and fulfilled.

However, this feeling doesn't last long. As the novelty wears off (example, a month after having a new car), dopamine levels drop, and with it, our sense of pleasure

diminishes. This leads to a craving for something new again, sparking a cycle of desire and short-lived satisfaction.

This psychological pattern explains why people often chase after the latest gadgets, fashions, or experiences. The joy comes not merely from the item itself, but from the rush of novelty and anticipation it brings. Understanding this cycle can help us seek more lasting sources of contentment beyond momentary thrills.

3. Give to Others

Helping others creates lasting meaning and satisfaction. Volunteer, donate, or simply do small acts of kindness. Reflect on how your giving impacts others and your own growth. Pause and reflect, giving to others feels more good than spending on self.

4. Savor the Good Moments

Savoring enhances the richness of positive experiences. Relive good memories through storytelling or photos. Share joyful moments with others. Take a pause during happy moments and mentally note, “This is a good moment.”

5. Avoid Constant Comparison

Comparing yourself with others fuels dissatisfaction and keeps you on the “hedonic treadmill”. Limit exposure to social media. Reflect on your personal journey and growth, not someone else's timeline.

6. Build Meaning, Not Just Pleasure

Purpose-driven activities provide deep satisfaction that outlasts temporary pleasures. Reflect on your values and goals.

Engage in spiritual or personal growth practices (e.g., prayer, self care, meditation(mindful pause for perspective), journaling).

7. Reset Through Voluntary Simplicity

Temporarily giving up luxuries helps you appreciate them more when reintroduced. Practice fasting, minimalism, or silence retreats.

8. Reflect on Impermanence

Realizing that nothing lasts forever increases appreciation of the now. Contemplate time, aging, and life's fleeting nature. Reflect on the changing seasons, or how fast children grow.

Wealth & Wisdom

“I hope everybody could get rich and famous & will have everything they ever dreamed of, so they will know that it’s not the answer” – Jim Carrey.

Money and fame are not the only keys to a happy life. While money can buy comfort, true Happiness stems from self-contentment, meaningful connections, purposeful actions, and a balanced mindset. No matter how wealthy you grow, true happiness cannot be purchased or sustained by riches in the long run.

Wealth and wisdom are often seen as two great treasures in life. Wealth provides comfort and opportunity, opening

doors and easing burdens. But without wisdom, wealth can be a hollow prize, leading to excess, confusion, or even despair.

Wisdom, guides how we use what we have. It teaches us balance, purpose, and gratitude. With wisdom, even little wealth can bring great contentment, while without it, even vast riches can leave the soul restless.

While it is noble to live a life worthy of dignity and good character, chasing respect or recognition from people is a pursuit that offers no stability. One day, a person may be praised and admired, and the next, spoken of unfavourably by the very same tongues. Human opinion is fragile—constantly shifting with mood, circumstance, and perception. Seeking approval from everyone is a struggle that can never truly be won.

True honor does not originate from people, for they possess no independent power to grant or withhold it. All honor and disgrace lie solely in the Hands of Allah (SWT). As Allah declares:

“Say (O' Muhammad SAW), "O Allah, Owner of Sovereignty, You give sovereignty to whom You will and You take sovereignty away from whom You will. You honor whom You will and You humiliate whom You will. In Your hand is [all] good. Indeed, You are over all things competent.” — Surah Al-‘Imran (3:26)

People often show respect when they are aware of one's fame or wealth. Yet, if you truly wish to understand the sincerity of others, especially those who do not know you, conceal your status and possessions. Move quietly among people as just another face in the crowd. It is in that quiet simplicity, away from titles and recognition, that genuine peace and authentic connections are found.

Gratitude in Adversity: The Story of Prophet Ayyub (AS)

In the realm of positive psychology, gratitude is recognized as a powerful emotion that can reframe our perspective, enhance resilience, and promote emotional well-being. But the concept of gratitude is not new. It has deep spiritual roots, exemplified beautifully in the life of Prophet Ayyub (AS)

Prophet Ayyub (AS) was a man of immense wealth, health, family, and status. Yet, he was tested in every domain of his life. He lost his children, his wealth, and was afflicted with a severe skin disease. Despite the magnitude of his suffering, Ayyub (AS) did not complain. Instead, he remained deeply patient, steadfast and sincerely grateful to Allah (SWT).

The Qur'an highlights his unwavering faith:

"Indeed, We found him patient. What an excellent servant! Indeed, he was one repeatedly turning back [to Allah]." — Surah Sa'd (38:44)

Even in illness and isolation, Prophet Ayyub (AS) turned to Allah with words of humility, not complaint: *"O my Lord, harm has touched me, and You are the Most Merciful of the merciful."* - Surah Al-Anbiya (21:83).

His focus was never on his losses, but on the mercy of his Creator. His gratitude was rooted in deep spiritual awareness. He saw trials not as punishment, but as opportunities to grow closer to Allah (SWT). Despite immense hardship, Ayyub (AS) cherished the greatest blessing of all: the ability to remember and praise Allah (SWT). Such was his heart—always grateful, always aware of Allah's favors.

Gratitude as a Therapeutic Force

Gratitude shifts one's focus from what is missing to what remains. From a psychological perspective gratitude builds profound resilience, helping individuals endure pain without falling into despair.

Research in positive psychology shows that gratitude:

Improves mood and reduces symptoms of depression.

Enhances coping skills during adversity.

Strengthens relationships and feelings of connectedness.

Promotes better sleep and overall well-being.

CHAPTER 14

Guilt and Repentance: Healing Through Tawbah

*O My servants who have wronged themselves, do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah (SWT) forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful". —
Surah Az-Zumar (39:53)*

Understanding Guilt in Islam- A Positive Psychology Perspective

Guilt is a universal human emotion experienced when we believe we have done something wrong or violated our own moral standards. Psychologically, guilt serves as an internal regulator that promotes self-reflection, accountability, and motivates corrective actions. However, excessive or unresolved guilt can lead to emotional distress and anxiety.

In Islam, guilt is recognized as a natural response when one sins or disobeys Almighty Allah's commands. It is a sign of the conscience functioning properly, a heart that feels guilt is alive and aware of its responsibilities.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

"Every son of Adam sins, and the best of those who sin are those who repent." (Jami' at- Tirmidhi)

Repentance(Tawbah) in Islam- A Positive Psychology Perspective

Tawbah literally means "return" - it is the act of returning to Allah (SWT) after a misstep or sin. Tawbah is a profound spiritual and psychological healing process. It transforms the weight of guilt into forgiveness, restoring inner peace and self-worth.

"Making mistakes and committing crime does not take you far from Allah (SWT), if you sincerely return, it is the greatest way to draw close to him, and knowing him and understanding him. This is the secret of returning to Allah(SWT) that most people don't know. When we make mistakes, we think very lowly of ourselves, we feel broken to the extent that we continue with sinning and negative cycle of wrong doing. But the most important thing to realize is this - sinning and returning back to Allah is the greatest growth engine of closeness to Allah(SWT). It is the secret of Awwliya – the friends of Allah . The Awwliya are not close to Allah(SWT) because they are perfect, they're the closest people to Allah(SWT) because they're the quickest to return to him." – Hisham Abu Yousuf.

Allah (SWT) says in the Quran

"Unquestionably, [for] the Awwliya of Allah, there will be no fear upon them, nor will they grieve. 'They are' who believe and are mindful of Allah. For them is good news in this worldly life and in hereafter. There is no change in the promise of Allah. That is 'truly' the ultimate triumph". – Surah Yunus (10: 62-64)

"Indeed, a day with your Lord is like a thousand years of what you count." — Surah Al-Hajj (22:47)

"You will know the true meaning of this life when you close your eyes and depart from this world. This life lasts only

for a few days. If Allah is pleased with you, then there is nothing more delightful than death. Death will be the most beautiful meeting of a creation with the Creator. We must live a life in which the angels receive us with honour as we enter the Hereafter. We must not live a life in which the angels stand before us with a terrifying expression, taking us away like a thief being dragged from this world." – Maulana Tariq Jameel

One of the most empowering teachings of Islam is the limitless mercy of Allah (SWT). The Quran repeatedly emphasizes that Allah's mercy exceeds all sins:

"Say, 'O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah (SWT). Indeed, Allah (SWT) forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful.'" (Quran 39:53)

In Sahih Muslim, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari reports, the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said:

"Had you not committed sins, Allah would have brought into existence a creation that would have committed sin (and Allah) would have forgiven them."

In Sahih Muslim, another narration:

"If you were not to commit sins, Allah would have swept you out of existence and would have replaced you by another people who have committed sin, and then asked forgiveness from Allah, and He would have granted them pardon."

This reminds us that every repentance draws us closer to Allah (SWT).

Repentance : A Conscious Choice

“Those who strive sincerely for Our sake—We will surely guide them to Our ways.” — Surah Al-‘Ankabūt (29:69)

“Indeed, Allah loves those who constantly repent.” —Surah Al-Baqarah (2:222)

The Qur'an, in its entirety, teaches that Allah (SWT), in His infinite mercy and wisdom, does not demand flawlessness from His servants, but calls them toward sincere faith, honest striving, and a heart that continually returns to Him.

From this understanding, it becomes clear that Allah does not ask His servants for perfection. Rather, He asks for sincerity, genuine effort in His path, and continual repentance.

This life is a precious gift from Allah, not merely for seeking basic comfort. We have come into this world with a purpose: to create, to make a difference, to invest our emotional, psychological, and spiritual abilities in ways that earn Allah's pleasure. Raise your children as your legacy, nurturing them to be righteous and responsible believers, so that even after you depart from this world, their deeds continue to bring you reward.

Be responsible in all your roles-as a child to your parents, as a parent to your children, husband or wife, a sibling, a relative, a friend, an employee, a colleague, a neighbour, citizen, and also to your own self. we also own a responsibility to nurture our self-love, believe in our abilities, and prioritize our well-being. Give your heart, focus, and energy to your work and live in a way that balances this world's good with Allah's pleasure.

Repent Before It's Too Late – The Door Is Always Open

Narrated by Abu Hurairah (RA): The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said :

“Allah (SWT) says, If a servant draws near to Me by a hand-span, I draw near to him by an arm's length; if he draws near by an arm's length, I draw near to him by a fathom; and if he comes to Me walking, I come to him running.” (Sahih al- Bukhari and Sahih Muslim)

There was once a man among the people of Bani Israel who committed grave sins, taking the lives of ninety-nine people. Realizing the weight of his wrongdoings, He first went to a pious man and asked: “Will Allah forgive me if I repent?” The pious man replied: “No, you will not be forgiven.” The man killed him too, bringing the total number of murders to 100. Later, he sought guidance from a scholar and asked: “I have killed 100 people. Will Allah forgive me if I repent ?” The scholar assured him that Allah's mercy is boundless and that sincere repentance is always accepted. The scholar replied to him, “Yes, Allah will forgive you, but on one condition: He advised the man to leave his corrupt town and travel to a village where the people were righteous, and there to seek Allah's forgiveness through worship and devotion, without ever returning to the place of his past sins.

The man set out toward the pious village, determined to turn his life around. Yet, along the journey, death overtook him before he could reach his destination. As his soul departed, the angels of mercy and the angels of punishment disputed over his fate. The angels of punishment argued that his sins were too great to forgive, while the angels of

mercy insisted that his sincere intention and journey toward righteousness warranted forgiveness.

Allah (SWT) commanded that the distance between the man and the village of pious people be measured. Miraculously, he was found to be just one span closer to the village of the righteous. By Allah's mercy, this small measure was enough: the angels of mercy claimed him, and his repentance was accepted. The man, once burdened by countless sins, was granted Paradise, a testament to Allah's infinite compassion and the power of sincere repentance. (Sahih Muslim, Abu Sa'id al-Khudri)

This story reminds us that no matter how far one has strayed, no matter the magnitude of one's mistakes, turning sincerely toward Allah with humility and intention can open the doors of mercy and forgiveness, even at the very end of life.

Anas ibn Malik (RA) reported:

The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad (SAW), said: "Allah, the Almighty, says: *'O son of Adam, as long as you keep calling upon Me and asking for My forgiveness, I will forgive you, and I shall not mind. O son of Adam, even if your sins were to reach the clouds of the sky and you then ask for My forgiveness, I shall forgive you. O son of Adam, if you come to Me with sins as vast as the earth, and then you meet Me ascribing no partner to Me, I shall grant you forgiveness nearly as great as it is.'*" — *Jami' at-Tirmidhi*

Every sincere repentance wipes away what came before it, giving the heart space to heal, grow, and reconnect with Allah's mercy. The path of healing is not about perfection, but about returning again and again with humility, honesty, and hope. In every return lies renewal. And sincere repentance is never rejected, for Allah's mercy surpasses all sins.

References

1. Al- Qur'an. The book of divine guidance for humanity, revealed to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) over a period of approximately 23 years (610–632 CE).
2. Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari. *Sahih al-Bukhari*.
3. Abu Isa Muhammad ibn Isa al-Tirmidhi. *Jami' al-Tirmidhi*.
4. Abu al-Qasim Sulayman ibn Ahmad al-Tabarani. *Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat*.
5. Muhammad ibn Yazid Ibn Majah al-Qazwini. *Sunan Ibn Majah*.
6. Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj al-Naysaburi. *Sahih Muslim*.
7. Abu Dawud Sulayman ibn al-Ash'ath al-Sijistani. *Sunan Abu Dawud*.
8. DeSocio, J.E.(2019). *Epigenetics, maternal prenatal psychosocial stress, and infant mental health*. Archives of Psychiatric Nursing, 33(3), 232-237.
9. Erikson, Erik H. (1950)*Childhood and Society*. W.W. Norton & Company.
10. Frankl, V.E.(1959). *Man's search for meaning*. Beacon press.
11. Armour & Kember, "Cardiac sensory neurons: their role in the brain-heart connection." (Journal of Cardiovascular Electrophysiology, 2004)
12. James, W. (1890). *The Principles of Psychology* (Vol. 1). New York: Henry Holt and Company.

13. Scarre, C. (2013). *The human past: World prehistory and the development of human societies* (3rd ed.). Thames & Hudson.
14. Heyman, G. D., Dweck, C. S., & Cain, K. M. (1992). Young children's vulnerability to self-blame and helplessness: Relationship to beliefs about goodness. *Child Development*, 63(2), 401–415.
15. Kernis, M. H. (2005). Measuring self-esteem in context: The importance of stability of self-esteem in psychological functioning. *Journal of Personality*, 73(6), 1569–1605.
16. Baumeister, R. F., Campbell, J. D., Krueger, J. I., & Vohs, K. D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4(1), 1–44.
17. Baumeister, R. F., Campbell, J. D., Krueger, J. I., & Vohs, K. D. (2003).
18. Discusses self-esteem as dynamic rather than fixed.
19. Baumeister, R. F., Campbell, J. D., Krueger, J. I., & Vohs, K. D. (2003). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 4(1), 1–44.
20. Gottman, J. M., & Levenson, R. W. (1992). Marital processes predictive of later dissolution: Behavior, physiology, and health. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 63(2), 22–233.
21. Johnson, M. D., Cohan, C. L., Davila, J., Lawrence, E., Rogge, R. D., Sullivan, K. T., & Bradbury, T. N. (2005). Problem-solving skills and affective expressions as predictors of change in marital satisfaction. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 73(1), 15–27.

22. Skowron, E. A., & Friedlander, M. L. (2015). Finer distinctions: Variability in satisfied older couples' problem-solving behaviours. *Family Process*, 54(1), 90–105.
23. Rothbart, M. K., & Bates, J. E. (2006). Temperament. In W. Damon & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology* (6th ed., Vol. 3, pp.99–166). Wiley. (See summary of developmental findings: temperament shows greater stability by around age three.)
24. Borg, M.E., Heffer, T., & Willoughby, T. (2024). Generational shifts in adolescent mental health: A longitudinal time-lag study. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 54(6), 837–848.
25. Madigan, S., Racine, N., Cooke, J. E., Korczak, D., & Zhu, J. (2023). Changes in depression and anxiety among children and adolescents from before to during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA Pediatrics*.177(4), 385–395.
26. Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). *Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(2), 377–389.
27. Bach, D., Groesbeck, G., Stapleton, P., Sims, R., Blickheuser, K., & Church, D. (2019). Clinical EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) improves multiple physiological markers of health. *Journal of Evidence-Based Integrative Medicine*, 24.
28. Church, D. (2013). Clinical EFT (Emotional Freedom Techniques) improves multiple physiological markers of health. *Journal of Evidence-Based Complementary & Alternative Medicine*, 18(2), 34–42.
29. Clond, M. (2016). The effectiveness of Emotional Freedom Techniques for depressive symptoms: A

- meta-analysis. *Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease*, 204(4), 284–290.
30. Che Wan Mohd Rozali, W. N. A., Ishak, I., Mat Ludin, A. F., Ibrahim, F. W., Abd Warif, N. M., & Che Roos, N. A. (2022). The impact of listening to, reciting, or memorizing the Qur'an on physical and mental health of Muslims: Evidence from systematic review. *International Journal of Public Health*, 67, 1604998.
 31. Anwar, S., Siregar, S. M. F., Alamsyah, T., Muliadi, T., Marniati, M., & Khairunnas, K. (2024). The dhikr and the mental health of the elderly in Aceh, Indonesia. *Health SA Gesondheid*, 29, a2456.
 32. Hechehouche, O., Dzulkifli, M. A., & Alias, I. A. (2020). The Qur'an-based healing through sound and its psychological effect: A review of literature. *IIUM Journal of Human Sciences*, 2(2), 75–80.
 33. Castro, T., Pinto, T. M., Morais, A., Costa, R., Jongenelen, I., & Lamela, D. (2023). The effect of parenting behaviours on adolescents' rumination: A systematic review of longitudinal studies. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 33, 3739–3752.
 34. Dai, Y., & Ouyang, N. (2025). Excessive screen time is associated with mental health problems and ADHD in US children and adolescents: Physical activity and sleep as parallel mediators.
 35. Draganski, B., Gaser, C., Busch, V., Schuierer, G., Bogdahn, U., & May, A. (2004). Neuroplasticity: Changes in grey matter induced by training. *Nature*, 427(6972), 311–312.
 36. Kolb, B., & Gibb, R. (2011). Brain plasticity and behaviour in the developing brain. *Journal of the Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 20(4), 265–276.

37. Mueller, P. A., & Oppenheimer, D. M. (2014). The pen is mightier than the keyboard: Advantages of longhand over laptop note taking. *Psychological Science*, 25(6), 1159–1168.
38. Bouchard, T. J., & McGue, M. (2003). Genetic and environmental influences on human psychological differences. *Journal of Neurobiology*, 54(1), 4–45.
39. Caspi, A., & Silva, P. A. (1995). Temperamental qualities at age three predict personality traits in young adulthood: Longitudinal evidence from a birth cohort. *Child Development*, 66(2), 486–498.
40. Abreu-Afonso, J., Ramos, M., Queiroz-Garcia, C., & Leal, I. (2021). How couple's relationship lasts over time? A model for marital satisfaction. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 35(5), 678–689.
41. Feinberg, M. E. (2003). The internal structure and ecological context of coparenting: A framework for research and intervention. *Parenting: Science and Practice*, 3(2), 95–131.
42. Ingahalikar, M., Smith, A., Parker, D., Satterthwaite, T. D., Elliott, M. A., Ruparel, K., ... & Verma, R. (2014). Sex differences in the structural connectome of the human brain. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111(2), 823–828.
43. Kuang, X., Li, H., Luo, W., Zhu, J., & Ren, F. (2025). The mental health implications of people-pleasing: Psychometric properties and latent profiles of the Chinese People-Pleasing Questionnaire. *PsyCh Journal*, 14(4), 500–512.
44. Ekman, P. (2003). *Emotions revealed: Recognizing faces and feelings to improve communication and emotional life*. Times Books.

45. Flammer, E., & Alladin, A. (2007). The efficacy of hypnotherapy in the treatment of psychosomatic disorders: Meta-analytical evidence. *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis*, 55(3), 251–274.
46. Rosendahl, J., Alldredge, C. T., & Haddenhorst, A. (2024). Meta-analytic evidence on the efficacy of hypnosis for mental and somatic health issues: A 20-year perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14, 1330238.
47. Lackner, J. M., Jaccard, J., Keefer, L., Brenner, D. M., Firth, R., Gudleski, G. D., Hamilton, F. A., Katz, L. A., Krasner, S. S., Ma, C.-X., Radziwon, C. D., & Sitrin, M. D. (2018). Improvement in gastrointestinal symptoms after cognitive behavior therapy for refractory irritable bowel syndrome. *Gastroenterology*, 155(1), 47–57.
48. Karan, A., Rosenthal, R., & Robbins, M. L. (2018). Meta-analytic evidence that we-talk predicts relationship and personal functioning in romantic couples. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*.
49. Seider, B. H., Hirschberger, G., Nelson, K., & Levenson, R. W. (2009). We can work it out: Age differences in relational pronouns, physiology, and behavior in marital conflict. *Psychology and Aging*, 24(3), 604–613.
50. Rohrbaugh, M. J., Shoham, V., Skoyen, J. A., Jensen, M., & Mehl, M. R. (2012). We-Talk, communal coping, and cessation success in a couple-focused intervention for health-compromised smokers. *Family Process*, 51(1), 107–121.
51. Hinnekens, C., Lemmens, G., Vanhee, G., & Verhofstadt, L. (2016). A pronoun analysis of couples' support transactions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7, 77.

52. Husain, W., & Faize, F. A. (2024). *Education without aptitude: mismatched vocational personalities for professional placements. e-mentor*, 4(106), 13-21.
53. CASEL. (2024). What does the research say? Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
54. Silk, J. S., Siegle, G. J., Lee, K. H., Nelson, E. E., Stroud, L. R., & Dahl, R. E. (2014). Increased neural response to peer rejection associated with adolescent depression and pubertal development. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 9(11), 1798–1807.
55. Lejuez, C. W., Hopko, D. R., LePage, J. P., Hopko, S. D., & McNeil, D. W. (2001). *A brief behavioral activation treatment for depression*. *Behavior Modification*, 25(2), 255–286.
56. Van Cauter, E., Plat, L., & Copinschi, G. (1998). Interrelations between sleep and the somatotrophic axis. *Sleep*, 21(6), 553–566.
57. Debono, M., Chan, S., & others. (2009). Replication of cortisol circadian rhythm: new advances in hydrocortisone replacement therapy.
58. Mohd Azmi, N. A. S., Juliana, N., Azmani, S., Mohd Effendy, N., Abu, I. F., Mohd Fahmi Teng, N. I., & Das, S. (2021). Cortisol on circadian rhythm and its effect on cardiovascular system. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(2), 676
59. Ekirch, A. Roger. *At Day's Close: Night in Times Past*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005.
60. Ekirch, A. Roger. "Segmented Sleep in Preindustrial Societies." *Sleep*, 2016.
61. Alexander, F. (1950). *Psychosomatic Medicine: Its Principles and Applications*. W. W. Norton & Company.

62. Ihara, A. S., Nakajima, K., Kake, A., Ishimaru, K., & Naruse, Y. (2021). Advantage of handwriting over typing on learning words: Evidence from an N400 event-related potential index. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 15, Article 679191.
63. Wiechmann, W., Edwards, R., Low, C., Wray, A., Boysen-Osborn, M., & Toohey, S. (2022). No difference in factual or conceptual recall comprehension for tablet, laptop, and handwritten note-taking by medical students in the United States: A survey-based observational study. *Journal of Educational Evaluation for Health Professions*, 19, 8.
64. Kunz-Ebrecht, S. R., Kirschbaum, C., Marmot, M. G., & Steptoe, A. (2004). The impact of stressors on health status and hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis and autonomic nervous system responsiveness in rheumatoid arthritis. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 66(3), 379–389.
65. Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(2), 377–389.
66. Pennebaker, J. W., & Chung, C. K. (2011). Expressive writing: Connections to physical and mental health. In H. S. Friedman (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of health psychology* (pp. 417–437). Oxford University Press.
67. Smyth, J. M. (1998). Written emotional expression: Effect sizes, outcome types, and moderating variables. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 66(1), 174–184.
68. O'Sullivan, S. (2015). *It's all in your head: True stories of imaginary illness*. London: Pan Macmillan.
69. Sapolsky, R. (2004). *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers*. Henry Holt & Company.

70. Zhou, S., Yu, M., Zhou, Z., et al. (2023). The effects of art therapy on quality of life and psychosomatic symptoms in adults with cancer: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *BMC Complementary Medicine and Therapies*, 23, 434.
71. Chida, Y., & Steptoe, A. (2009). The association of anger and hostility with future coronary heart disease. *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, 53(11), 936–946.
72. Kiecolt-Glaser, J.K., et al. (2002). *Depression and immune function*. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127(3), 472–494
73. Boly, M., Faymonville, M. E., Peigneux, P., Lambermont, B., Damas, P., Del Fio, G., & Maquet, P. (2007). Brain regions associated with hypnotic modulation of pain: A functional magnetic resonance imaging study. *NeuroImage*, 34(3), 932–940
74. Abtin, S., Seyedaghamiri, F., Aalidaeijavadi, Z., Farrokhi, A. M., Moshrefi, F., Ziveh, T., Zibaii, M. I., Aliakbarian, H., & Haghparast, A. (2024). A review on the consequences of molecular and genomic alterations following exposure to electromagnetic fields: Remodeling of neuronal network and cognitive changes. *Brain Research Bulletin*, 217, Article 111090.
75. Ross, A., & Thomas, S. (2010). The psychosomatic impact of yoga in medical education: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of medical education and well-being*, 5(3), 123–145.(Study No. 512E19837.
76. Streeter, C. C., Gerbarg, P. L., Saper, R. B., Ciraulo, D. A., & Brown, R. P. (2012). Effects of yoga on the autonomic nervous system, gamma-aminobutyric-acid, and allostasis in epilepsy, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. *Medical Hypotheses*, 78(5), 571–579

77. Mayer, E. (2016). *The Mind-Gut Connection*. How the hidden conversation within our bodies impacts our mood, our choices, and our overall health. Harper Wave.
78. Pall, M.L. (2013). Electromagnetic fields act via activation of voltage-gated calcium channels to produce beneficial or adverse effects. *Journal of Cellular and Molecular Medicine*, 17(8), 958–965.
79. Xu, Y., Duan, J., Qin, L., & Liu, Y. (2025). Association between screen time and depressive and anxiety symptoms among Chinese adolescents. *Journal Name*. Advance online publication.
80. Abreu-Afonso, J., Ramos, M., Queiroz-Garcia, C., & Leal, I. (2021). How couple's relationship lasts over time? A model for marital satisfaction. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 35(5), 678–689.
81. Feinberg, M. E. (2003). The internal structure and ecological context of coparenting: A framework for research and intervention. *Parenting: Science and Practice*, 3(2), 95–131
82. Gupta, M.A., & Gupta, A.K. (1996). Psycho dermatology: An update. *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology*, 34(6), 1030–1045.