

The Stress Fight/ Flight/ Freeze Pattern

A "Self-Help" Pattern in Overcoming Blocking/Stuttering

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- What is the Fight/Flight or General Arousal Syndrome?
- How is this neuro-physiological phenomena tied in with blocking/stuttering?
- Why is it so hard to overcome a block when you are in one?
- How does the Fight/Flight Syndrome help explain the difficulty in overcoming a "block?"
- If I can "fly into a block," can I learn how to "fly into a calm"?

After submitting this pattern to Robert Strong of New Zealand for review, he highlighted the word "Freeze" in the title and wrote back:

I'm glad you've added this Bob; to me, that's what holding back/blocking is. One is not running away externally or fighting externally (exempting muscle contortions) but alternating between running away internally and fighting internally, and 'locked' (frozen) in the middle of the two. **'Locked' between consciously wanting to speak and unconsciously wanting to hold back.** Another analogy of being 'locked' is like a Kenwood mixer speed control. The speed control works by a centrifugal mechanism that is continually making and breaking contact to turn the power on and off to the motor... is flicking back and fro non-stop but it appears to be running at a set and constant (locked) speed.

He drew a graphic to illustrate his point. I have re-created it in Microsoft VisioJ:

Figure 1
Frozen in the Middle



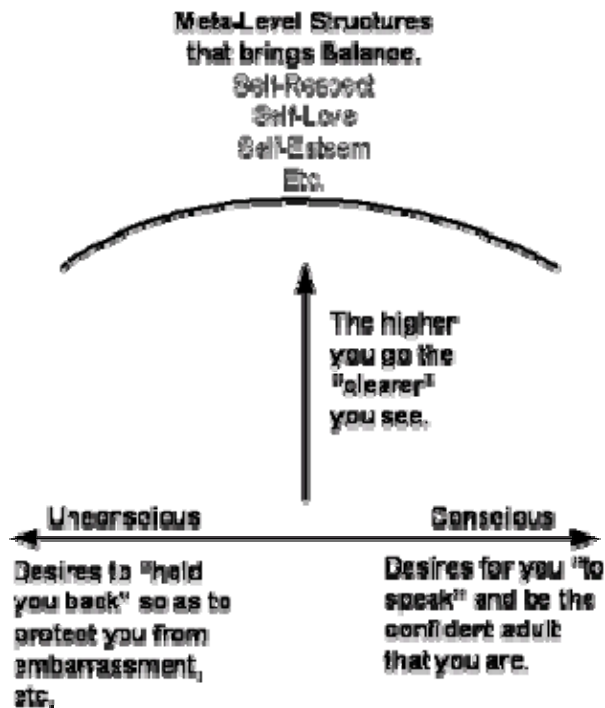
Robert is correct. It is like the proverbial mule that starved to death between the two hay stacks. He couldn't decide which one to eat from? It is like running with one foot on the gas pedal and the other one on the brake? In the process you get nowhere but you burn out. Just think how much energy you expend trying *not* to block/stutter.

I ran these remarks by another PWBS (Person Who Blocks-Stutters) and she wrote back:

What Robert says about wanting to speak and wanting to hold back at the same time is right on. That is the crux of John Harrison's thoughts on stuttering apart from the stuttering hexagon. Like you said, it is like putting on the brakes but wanting to go forward at the same time. Divided intentions cause all kinds of things like stuttering – not being able to go to the bathroom in public; not singing on key in front of someone; not being able to hit the target; forgetting your speech in front of an audience; trying to quit a bad habit, and on and on. It is all the same thing.

Importantly, as long as one stays in the middle, one will never get out of that "frozen moment." One must go *higher* and access higher resources and bring those *to bear* on the problem. So long as one stays in the middle, that one will remain frozen. You have to go higher for one never solves the problem by remaining *inside* the problem (See Figure 2). This article introduces you to the *how* of doing just that.

Figure 2
Thawing the Freeze



Any context that the PWBS defines as being stressful usually triggers blocking/ stuttering. Importantly, situations defined as being extremely stressful can easily trigger the fight/ flight response known as the General Arousal Syndrome. I just finished the first session with a PWBS. He has had good results with the McGuire Program but is still blocking/stuttering in the work place. In talking with him, he said that the McGuire program refers to a block as a "chest freezer." Now, when that happens, the General Arousal Syndrome has "cranked up."

Fear and stress come into play as we think and interpret things in fearful and stressful ways. When the fear and stress are intense enough, our animalistic

instincts take over. When we sense danger, threat, fear, insecurity, etc, these messages send signals to the cerebral cortex (the *higher mind*) which then passes them on to the thalamus. The amygdala also comes into play. The amygdala is an almond-shaped neuro structure at the base of the brain and is involved in producing and responding to nonverbal signs of anger, avoidance, defensiveness, and fear. These in turn activates the fight/flight syndrome known also as the General Arousal Syndrome. As this triggers the General Arousal Syndrome, everything inside of us shouts to do what is necessary to survive. The time has come to fight or flee.

For the PWBS, an intense block has all the symptoms of someone who's General Arousal Syndrome has activated totally and completely. More than one PWBS has given me the metaphor of viewing themselves as a "deer looking into the headlights" of an automobile about to hit them when describing a block. Now, when experiencing a block that severe, which is common, the General Arousal Syndrome has activated and the person is in a full fledged panic attack.

Blood is withdrawn from the brain and stomach and sent to the larger muscle groups; adrenalin is released into the blood; the heart beats faster; breathing becomes rapid and intense; the eyes dilate; the individual starts perspiring; the fats, cholesterol and sugar in the blood stream increase; the stomach secretes more acid; the immune system slows down, and thinking shifts to a more black-and-white, survivalist mode. Is it any wonder that many have erroneously defined the cause of stuttering as being physical? It sure seems "real" for one *feels* so intensely.

One PWBS after reading this stated, "You bet, that is when the devil takes over. That is what PWBS think; 'SOMETHING' uncontrollable takes over. And I'm sure what you are stating here IS that 'something'." Yes, that is what I mean. There is no outside "force" that takes over, it just seems that way. It is all an "inside job."

The fact that a severe block activates the General Arousal Syndrome also explains why it is so difficult to access a resource state when in one. The entire mind-body system screams either for one to fight or to flee. With neither a possibility in most cases, one just remains there in the block attempting to burst through it with stuttering.

When our fight/ flight syndrome has activated, it is as if *thinking* is impossible. Because we feel so intensely the fear/threat, our primitive instincts take over and what little thinking if any goes on it is *either* fight or *flee*. There is no other choice available for we are functioning more from the lower parts (more primitive) areas of our brain and much less from the cerebral cortex.

In chapter one of the training manual, *Mastering Blocking/Stuttering: A Handbook for Gaining Fluency*, I spoke of state dependency and being *inside* a state. We are now providing a powerful example of that concept. For, when one is so inside a block that the General Arousal Syndrome has activated, one is totally inside that state.

However, there is good news. With proper therapy and practice, one can eventually move from the *primitive mind* (thalamus, amygdala, etc.) to the *higher mind* (cerebral cortex) and *apply* reason and logic to those fearful situations. Instead of coming off of fears learned in childhood, one is able to apply the *higher mind* of the adult to those contexts that did trigger blocking/stuttering.

Power/Resource Matrix

Now when one is so *inside* a block that one has activated the General Arousal Syndrome, one views oneself as totally *powerless* and *un-resourceful*. How could one be otherwise? Also, when one typically gets so *inside* a block that one activates the General Arousal Syndrome, that person will probably need individual therapy plus time for practice in overcoming the blocking. Yet, there is hope – much hope.

However, you can do much on your own. All of the patterns in this book are about “how” to remain *out* of the block. We must get *out* of the primitive mind and activate *the higher mind*. On the web site, you will find an article entitled [Overcoming Blocking/Stuttering: A Testimony](#). I worked with this person therapeutically. The author wrote:

“In the drop-down through technique we established a strong reference point and we took each negative feeling to this reference point. I am a visual type of person and, like Bob and some of his other clients, I hold strong religious beliefs. With Bob’s guidance we established a very strong reference point (resource) that combined both these characteristics and we took each negative feeling to this sacred for me place. They were all neutralized (meta-stated) in insignificant nuisances that had no impact on me anymore.”

Here the author describes how he has learned to move out of the fear and to higher resource states. So, speaking technically, he was able to move out of his *primitive mind* that activated the fight/flight response which created the block and go mentally to his higher resource states which for him were religious. He moved from his *primitive mind* to thinking from his cerebral cortex wherein he accessed his higher spiritual resources. You may read the article at:

http://www.neurosemantics.com/Stuttering/testimony_stephen.htm

Generally, once we enter into the stress state, state-dependency takes over so that we are not in a good place to learn new patterns. Not at that moment. State dependency means that all of our *communication, behavior, perception, memory, and learning* are almost completely governed by a given state at a particular time. For PWBS, the state is expressed in the block. The state (whether anger, fear, anxiety, etc.) controls what we see, how we think, what we feel, our memories, behaviors, communications. As state dependency takes over, it takes some time for all of the neuro-transmitters, adrenalin, and autonomic nervous system activation to run their course.

Michael Hall says, “The time to learn state management skills, of course, is **not** during the stress storm. Learning navigation skills when a ship is tossing and turning in the open sea in the midst of 40 foot waves is a bit late in the Game.”

The primary secret of stress management for the PWBS is to learn how to avoid sending the “*Danger!*” message when we are not facing a physical threat. This takes some doing. It means learning to run our own brains and to take charge of the higher levels of meanings that we give to things. It means learning how to stop reacting to circumstances involving communication as if they are a real threat. Instead, it means that one learns to respond more realistically from the *adult* mind of being under control.

It means that the PWBS stops defining speaking as if it is a life threatening experience. It means that the PWBS no longer chooses to give others control over one's life. It means loving and honoring oneself no matter how one speaks. It means that one learns that speaking is just that – it is just talking. Forgive the arrogance of this statement but no one has ever died from blocking/ stuttering. By that I mean, "Is it really necessary to attach so much fear to speaking that one activates the General Arousal Syndrome?" Are you *really* in a life threatening situation?

I sent this article to several PWBS for feedback. One of them sent this response to my above statement:

I think the real fear is that they are NOT going to die. If they died then they would not have to live out the shame and humiliation. They are not in a life threatening situation but they are in a self-esteem threatening situation. What is more painful, being totally humiliated or dying? At least dying ends your misery but being humiliated seems never to end and it is a real threat...that is why it kicks the fight/flight syndrome into action. Seriously, death is easy compared to living a life of humiliation. Sounds weird but ask PWS how many times they wished they were dead. It is not the fear of death that activates the fight/flight mechanism it is the fear of humiliation. Does this make sense?

It is always good to get feedback isn't it? My point – emotions are just that – emotions. They only have the power we give them. My encouragement to you is that there is hope – much hope for you to overcome this problem. That is *why* we are working so hard to develop a model that works most of the time in leading people to fluency. In our work, we encourage you to *welcome* your emotions. When the fight/ flight syndrome fires from your chest *freezing up*, let that be a signal for you to engage your *determination* in overcoming this problem. The fact that you are reading this article tells me that you are already doing just that. Read on.

Accessing the highest levels of our mind enables us to manage stress more effectively. This allows us to simply eliminate our perception of "stress" in the first place. And when stress goes, so will unnecessary experiences of fear and anger. When that happens, we simply do not get recruited to stress ourselves out. When we learn to put new meanings (reframing) to old triggers for blocking, we learn how to manage the meanings we give and the frames we set when we face those contexts that did trigger blocking.

The Stress Management Pattern involves managing our energy over time to work more efficiently and restore our sense of power and resourcefulness. It involves learning to recognize the bodily symptoms of stress, to accept such as just the functioning of our body, to breathe more fully and deeply, to relax tight muscles, to stretch, and to use yoga exercises to train the body for calmness.

How to Play the Game of Masterful Relaxed Alertness

How can we become truly masterful in coping and handling the demands, challenges, threats, fears, etc. of communicating at work and at home so that we don't stress out about these things? How can we avoid the fear/ anxiety emotions that set off blocking/ stuttering?

1) Step 1: Recognize the Presence of Stress

Because we cannot control or effectively manage anything *outside-of-awareness*, we first must welcome in those contexts that trigger the stress that activates the blocking/ stuttering. So, first grant yourself permission to notice those times and to notice the presence of stress and its symptoms in your life. Take an inventory of those circumstances that create the stress that initiates the blocking.

Now, notice what it does to you mind-body system. Begin with your body. At the primary level, *stress* usually shows up in the body of the PWBS as tightness in the throat, chest and/or jaws. Muscle tense in those areas. Those areas also become inflexible. What happens to you when you are in a block?

Enter into the tension and tightness and let it teach you. Quiet yourself and establish communication with that part of you responsible for causing the tightness and tension. You might ask the tightness in your neck or in your chest:

"What message do you have for me?"

"If you were to speak to me, what would you say?"

"Is the tightness/tension more physical or more mental?"

"Is it both physical and mental?"

"What is the purpose of this *tense or tight part* for you?"

2) Step 2: Specify Your Stress Strategy

There is order and structure to how you *stress yourself*. How do you do it? Begin with those contexts that trigger you're going into the state of stress.

"What induces a stress experience in you?" ("What contexts? With what people specifically? With what groups? etc.")

"When it comes to speaking, what situations do you fear the most?"

"What do you say to yourself that increases the stress and intensifies the block?"

"How do you express these thoughts in your mind?"

"What tonality, volume, voice, etc. do you use?"

"What are the qualities of your pictures when you *stress*? Are the pictures up close, big and bright? Are the sounds loud or soft? Where do they come from? Are they from outside your body? Are they from the right side or the left side?"

Stress is a forerunner of fear. It triggers fear. Fear triggers blocking. It, as all thinking, has an internal dynamic structure. The magic of stress doesn't just occur without some *spell* being cast. So how do you do it? What *stress language* do you use to create the fear that drives the block? Name your poison!

"I have to get it out!"

"If I stutter, they will think I am dumb."

"Why can't I talk like everybody else?"

"I hate it when I stutter."

Cognitive Distortions:

What *thinking patterns* do you use to crank up your stress? This gives us more information about the set-up of the blocking. We begin to learn what thinking patterns make it more exaggerated and sick. Here are some of them (Cognitive Distortions):

- **Personalizing** – Interpreting events as "about me."
- **Awfulizing and Catastrophizing** – Interpreting events in the most extreme negative ways possible.
- **Emotionalizing** – Interpreting the presence and meaning of "emotions" as the ultimate source of information.
- **Minimizing or Discounting** – Interpreting to make of lesser importance.
- **Maximizing or Exaggerating** – Interpreting things to make them of greater importance.
- **All or Nothing Thinking** – Interpreting things as if there are only polar choices and nothing in between.
- **Perfectionism** – Interpreting things as if "It is not good enough," "It could be better."

Carefully review the above Cognitive Distortions. PWBS have a tendency to interpret their world in several of those unhealthy ways of thinking. Mark those that apply to you. Then ask yourself the question, "What would happen to my blocking/stuttering if I refused to do that anymore?"

Physical Elements:

What *physical elements* add to your stress or prevent you from operating from calmness?

Shallow breathing

Tight throat and jaws

Poor posture

Contracted abdomen

Lack of focus: constant eye shifting

Tightening and holding neck or jaw muscles

Ask yourself:

How can I alter my physiology so that it serves me better?

How can I breathe in a calmer way?

How can I use my posture to relax my chest, neck and jaws?

Knowing how you create the block allows for you to develop ways for messing it up. You will be able to prevent the block from working automatically. Instead of it *running you*, you will be able to *run* it. Now you can play around with it so that it can begin to serve you well. To flush out the higher mental frames that create the stress that creates the block ask:

Qualities of the Image:

What qualities characterize my stress?

What are the qualities of the pictures, sounds and feelings of my image of stress? Are my pictures of it close in, big and bright?

Are the sounds loud?

Where in my body do I feel the stress?

What tone of voice can I use in my self-talk?

Higher Mental Frames that Create Stress:

Which of the following kinds of thinking/believing describes me?

I must perform, achieve and produce!

I have to be perfect.

I must be in control at all times.

I have to get it out.

I have to be liked and approved.

They will think I am not normal if I stutter.

How do I compare with X?

I must speak fluently.

You can't trust others. They always judge you by how you speak.

I should not be frustrated or disappointed. It's not fair.

(Check the mental frames listed in the stuttering matrix. You will find this on the web site in the article entitled "[How to Create a Good Dose of Stuttering.](#)")

Typically, you will find that these are higher frames that create the Stress Games that we play. They set us up for *pressures and needs*: the need for achievement, approval, control, competition, perfection, impatience, anger.

Does your stress have a feeling of *anger* in it?

Does impatience contribute to your stress?

How much does the desire to speak *fluently* contribute to your stress?

Or perhaps you have competitive, must-be-better than stress?

Do you experience stress as a make-or-break feeling?

How much do you have your identity and self-definition wrapped up in speaking fluently, achievement, approval, control, etc.? (See the Self Matrix.)

When we think and believe in toxic ways, thinking that our very *being* is dependent upon what others think, the job we hold, status symbols, etc., we create *fire breathing Dragons* that can consume a lot of psychic energy.

3) Step 3: Practice Flying into Calm.

Can you fly into fear and anxiety that create a block? PWBS have learned to do that extremely well. Most people can "fly into a rage." Can you? In fact, I have never met a person who couldn't "fly into a rage" at a moment's notice. Can you fly into a fear – a fearful state of worry, dread, and anxiety? Well, if you can do either of these, then you have all the neurological equipment you need for "*flying into a calm.*"

Flying into a calm gives you the ability to access a state of *instant calm* in a moments notice. Indeed, to learn how to *fly into a calm* in those moments that did trigger blocking, would eliminate the problem of stuttering, wouldn't it?

Actually, you already can do it. I know you can. After all, you have a “telephone voice” don’t you? You know the scenario. You’re in the living room or kitchen and having an intense argument with a loved one. You’re saying things that you would never say to a stranger. You save those kinds of things for the people that you love most. It’s your way of testing to see if they can keep on loving you if you do *this* to them! So you really get into state. You raise your voice. You feel really, really angry, upset, frustrated ... and then the phone rings.

You take a breath, and then calmly and politely answer it. “Hello...”

You answer it with your calm and even professional “telephone voice!”

See, *you can fly into a calm!*

Creating a “Calm State”

To develop your “*Flying into a Calm*” skills, you only need to practice this skill, orchestrate it so that it becomes stronger, more powerful, and so that you have ready access to it in a split second. It’s already a resource; you only need to develop it further to put it at your complete disposal.

OK, I admit that for a PWBS, it may not be as simple as that in those extreme contexts where you go into a panic when it is time to speak. However, let’s not pass off this process to lightly. You may be surprised at what you can do. For sure, you have nothing to lose but some time practicing. It certainly won’t cost you any money to practice.

First, *amplify* a state of *calm*. Think about a time when you really demonstrated the power of your telephone voice. Be there again, seeing what you saw, hearing what you heard, and totally feeling what you felt.

What enabled you to step out of the angry and yelling state to the calm and cool state where you said, “Hello!”? What ideas, beliefs, values, decisions, etc. empowered that response? Why didn’t you answer the phone with your angry voice? Why didn’t you yell at the person calling in?

Your answers to these questions will help you flush out the “flying into a calm” mental frames of references that actually work in your life. As you make these clear, amplify them, give yourself even *more reasons* for doing this and then set up a trigger (or anchor) so that you can *step back into this place of mind and emotion* whenever you so choose. State your ideas, beliefs, values, decisions, etc about flying into a calm in powerful terminology that works for you:

“I know how to fly into a calm for I have done it before.”

“I am not a child. I can *choose* to run my own brain.”

“I absolutely refuse to let my fear of what others may think of my speech create fear and anxiety in me guaranteeing my blocking.”

"I can go to *my place of comfort and relaxation* in the split second of a thought."

Consider:

- What would be a good symbol of total calmness?
- What sound, sight, and sensation would remind me of this state?
- Let such be your anchor as you connect that symbol to that state.

Now *practice stepping into it*, setting that link to some trigger, breaking state, and then using the trigger to *step back* into that place where you manage your emotions.

4) Step 4: Texture Your Game of Flying into a Calm

Access your best representation of a *confidently relaxed state*. The best way to do this is to recall a time when you were really relaxed in a calm and centered way. Imagine going to that place and be there totally (associate into that moment). See what you saw in that moment; hear what you heard and feel what you feel being there totally and completely. Recall it fully so that you can access this state and then connect it to a word, picture, or sensation so that when you recall that it will put you back into that calm state. We call this *anchoring* which is just a trigger that recalls the state.

You may wish to amplify the state by making the pictures more vivid; by making the sounds more explicit; by talking to yourself in a calm relaxing way using words that totally and completely relax you.

After you have fully accessed, amplified, and anchored that primary resource state – step back from it and examine it:

- What is the nature and quality (pictures, sounds, feelings) of your relaxed state?
- What qualities and factors make up this state?
- What other qualities would you like to edit into this state?

Frequently, while the *relaxed state* that we access is appropriate for a sunny day on the beach, it really is not for the workplace or those times that typically trigger blocking/stuttering. Typically such ideas have led us to jump to an unfounded conclusion, "Well, I cannot use calmness or relaxation there." Then we never again consider relaxation as a possible resource.

- What if you tempered and textured your relaxed state so that it had *the kind of alertness, mindfulness, readiness, etc.* that would make you even more resourceful when you typically block?

- What if you qualified it with the kind of qualities, resources, and distinctions that would give you the kind of mastery you need in those times that typically trigger blocking?

This describes what we mean by framing and reframing. This also shows how a higher level state (or meta-state) differs from a primary state. In primary states of relaxation, we feel relaxed. Our muscles are limp, our breathing becomes easy, our calmness and comfort dominate our mind and everything feels at ease. It's a great state. But hardly the state we must have in overcoming a block. We need a special kind of relaxed/calm state for such occasions. We need a higher level state of mind characterized by:

- Relaxed Alertness
- Calm Confidence in our ability to speak fluently
- Relaxed attentiveness in listening fully to the other person and not being concerned with whether or not he/she may be judging how we speak
- The relaxed energy of readiness and eagerness to speak calmly and with confidence knowing that our mind-body system knows how to do just that.
- Accepting the frustrations of everyday life and not judging our sense of *self* should we in fact slide into a block or stutter once in awhile.

Ask yourself:

- What *kind* of relaxation do you need or want to speak fluently in all contexts?
- *How* do you want to feel calm and confident and relaxed whenever you speak?
- What kind of a relaxed mind and emotions do you want or need in a given situation?
- What are the mental frames of mind that you want to layer your mind with in developing your core relaxed state?

These mental frames of mind will *texture* your state of relaxation. Repeat them until they coalesce into this core state of relaxation. Build you a menu list of mental frames (thoughts) that through constant repetition you create a most useful state of calmness and relaxation.

5) Step 5: Practice Accessing your Relaxed Core State

In the book [*Instant Relaxation*](#) Michael Hall, Ph.D. and Debra Lederer speak about accessing our "Relaxed Core Self." This refers to feeling relaxed with our sense of self, to feel relaxed with ourselves, to feel confident, assured, and centered. These

kinds of mental frames of mind structure a state of mind that enables us to operate from a sense of safety and security. This prevents the “*Danger! Threat! and Overload!*” messages from triggering us into a block. Wouldn’t that be nice? This is exactly what the PWBS needs in order to speak confidently and fluently in all contexts and not just in those perceived “safe” moments.

When we have this kind of centered sense of self, then we have a platform of comfort and security from which we can sally out to the adventures of life. This gives balance to our life energies and allows for fluency in *all* contexts.

This state also becomes a state for rejuvenation. We shuttle out to a challenge, and then we retreat to our relaxation zone to recuperate and rejuvenate our strength. We move out to perform as achievers, and then we move back in to just **be** and enjoy ourselves as persons.

How do we do this? Simple. Here’s an induction written by Michael in our book [*Games for Mastering Fear*](#):

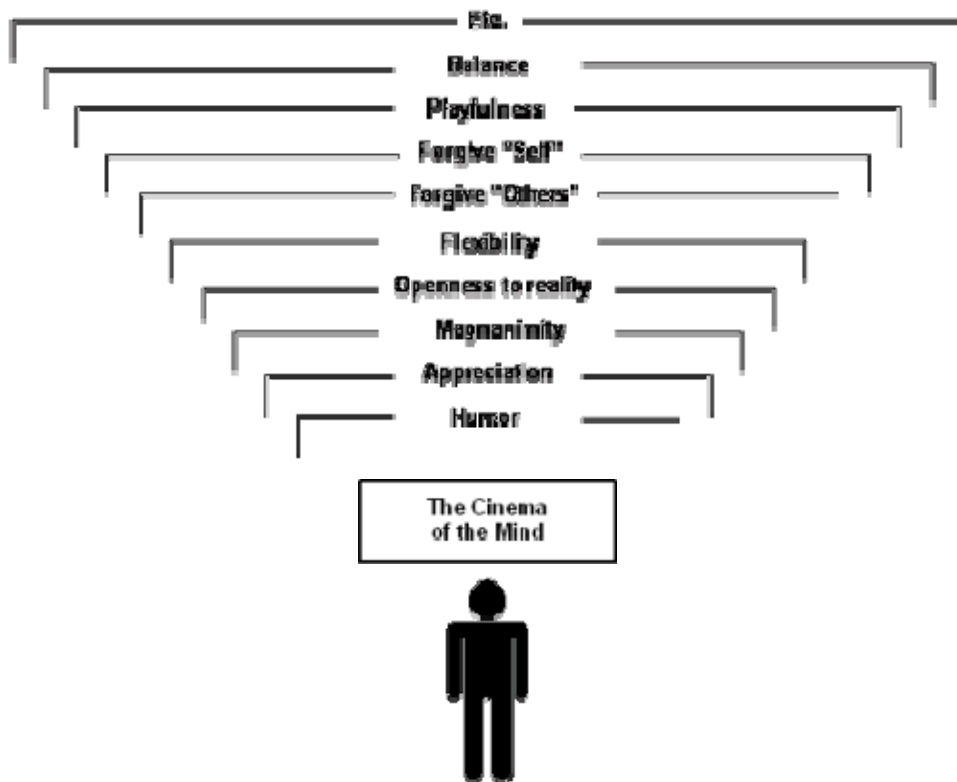
Imagine what it would look like, sound like, and feel like to completely and thoroughly access your own relaxed core state and make it your game. Float back in your imagination to capture bits and pieces of anything that will enrich your editing of such a self-image and begin allowing these pieces to come together to create a powerful sense of a core self; relaxed, confident, assured ... comfortable in your own skin, breathing fully and completely, taking charge of your thinking, emoting, speaking, and behaving... Just imagine what that would feel like and how that would transform your life....

... and when you have edited it to your liking, and it feels compelling, step into it and be there. And enjoy it... so that you experience it as a joyful relaxed core state. And now as you *translate it from mind to muscle*, imagine breathing with this and seeing out of the eyes of your core relaxed state. Hear the voice of this state—speaking with a calm confidence that radiates a sense of your inner power.

- Are all of your parts aligned with this?
- Does any part of you object to living this way?
- Would you like this as your way of being in the world?

6) Step 6: **Keep Refining and Texturing Your Relaxed Core State**

Figure 3
Building a Core State of Enhanced “Relaxation”



Because of the mind's ability to layer one thought upon another thought – to texture and enrich one thought with another thought – this process does not end with the first design engineering of this highly resourceful state. With the tools for *running our own brains*, you can now maintain a creative attitude about all of the other resources that you can find and incorporate in that *relaxed core state*.

For instance, why not add a big dose of *healthy humor* to the mix? The ability to lighten up, to *not* take yourself so seriously, to enjoy people and experiences tremendously enriches relaxation. How many times have you become extremely fearful of a speaking moment and it was totally unnecessary? I mean you became so fearful that you would block and that the other person would judge you as being less than human and it was totally unnecessary. The person you were speaking to would in no way judge you like that and you know it. Yet, you did the judging of yourself and not the other person. Well, what about just stepping *outside* that and see how ridiculous such thinking is and laugh at your *childish* behavior.

We can explode most fears by using the humor power of exaggeration. Exaggerate the fear until it begins to become ridiculous. Then exaggerate it some more. Eventually it becomes funny and then your humorous perspective enables you to operate in a more human and delightful way.

Or, how about *appreciation*? What if you moved through the world with an appreciation of things, people, and experiences? Instead of *fearing* what other people may think of your speech, *appreciate* that most sympathetically listen patiently to you. *Appreciate* that you can not only speak, but you can in some contexts speak fluently which means you can learn how to speak fluently in all

contexts. I know some mute people who would love to have those abilities. How would that *texture the quality of your stress*?

Magnanimity would be another resource. It would enable you to operate from a sense of having a big-heart and thereby prevent you from becoming mentally ruffled. How would that enhance your life?

Then there is *openness to reality, flexibility, forgiveness, playfulness, balance*, and the list goes on and on. Create your own list of mental frames of mind that will enhance your *core state of relaxation*. Practice, practice, practice building that state so that you can learn to *fly into a calm* instead of flying into a *block*. You have already learned that one really well. You don't need to practice *flying into a block*, do you?

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