

Reinventing Yourself

A Fresh New Opportunity

Dr. Mario Alonso Puig

Plataforma
Actual



Overcoming the limits of our mind

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Mario Alonso Puig



First edition published in Spanish
in 2010 by Plataforma Editorial

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ISBN: 978-84-18285-91-2

Cover design:

Utopikka

www.utopikka.com

Typesetting:

Grafime. Mallorca 1 - 08014 Barcelona

www.grafime.com

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For my wife, Isabella and my three sons, Mario, Joaquín and Borja for being lovely individuals that inspire me every day and help me to be a little better. You are my true masters and the biggest motivation which helps me to get over the fear of overcoming my own limitations.

For my mother, María Celia, somebody full of beauty, courage, Commitment and love of life. A never-ending inspiration and an example of a person who can overcome anything.

For my five brothers, José María, Manuel, Juan Ignacio, Fernando, and Alejandro. I will always feel an infinite gratitude for the great luck of having found you on my path.

To the memory of my father who will always remain in my heart as someone who tried to give me the roots to grow from and wings to fly.

To the memory of Joaquín, someone I shall never forget.

“In our naivety we have forgotten that beneath our world of
reason another one lies buried.”

CARL GUSTAV JUNG

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Acknowledgements

Introduction

We all have to face obstacles and problems in life which very often bring us to a standstill. It is as if we are invaded with a profound conviction that the problem cannot be sorted out or, simply, that we do not have the talent or the necessary ability to find a solution.

Many people do not know what to do when their relationship with another person is not as they would like it to be. Others would like to be more daring, more decisive, to learn a new sport, a foreign language or, simply, to understand better how a computer works. Nevertheless, something gets in the way and they finally decide to give up. There are human beings that wish to feel appreciated a little bit more, to strengthen their self-esteem, so that others respect them. In the end, after a series of failed attempts they end up giving in.

Nowadays, there are also people who have experienced one failure after another and they feel unable to keep going. They are individuals who have done everything in their hands to keep their companies up and running, their work, their families and their lives. They feel that so much effort has not been worth it, that at heart it has been a

complete waste of time. I have written this book for all these people because their suffering is not foreign to me.

I have spent many years of my life trying to understand the complexity to be found in every one of us and the curious reactions that we have when we need to face adverse circumstances. My research started out with a simple question: what is it that, when faced with certain challenges, clouds our mind and makes us unable to think clearly, while at the same time all our energy is drained and we experience funny feelings in our stomach?

“Anxiety is a curious state of uneasiness because we start to suffer in the present for something that we do not even know for sure is going to happen in the future.”

Faced with the profound changes that are occurring and the huge doubts which we live with, the levels of anxiety never cease to increase throughout the world. The formula for generating an anxious state is really simple. It is sufficient to imagine that in the future a series of problems will appear and that we are going to be unable to solve them. Anxiety is a curious state of uneasiness because we start to suffer in the present for something that we do not even know for sure is going to happen in the future. René Descartes, the great XVII century French mathematician and philosopher, wrote a letter at the end of his life in which this original comment was to be found, “My life has been full of misfortunes, many of which never took place”.

“If we wish to increase our capacity to solve problems [...], we need to learn how to transcend the limits that our own mind sets us.”

We need to see what is hidden in the depths of our mind, because only then will we understand with much greater clarity where exactly our real limitations lie. We will not find the answer to this state of mind by thinking things over and over again in our bewildered minds, but rather by looking in a very different place. As Albert Einstein put it, “no problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it.”

If the mind has such an ability to let worry take root, how are we going to be able to solve this situation by using the same method that created the problem in the first place? If we wish to increase our capacity to solve problems and we hope to become more competent when looking for opportunities, we need to learn how to transcend the limits that our minds set us.

In this book we are going to spend time looking at many of the least known, but most important aspects, of how the human brain works. I have a great desire and complete confidence that when we understand why we act as we do, we will be able to start planning new strategies which will allow us to obtain what, until now, seemed out of our reach.

Training schemes in general attach great value to erudition and, in fact, it is this they evaluate. However, they neither grade nor measure in any way the ability to listen, empathy, self-knowledge, wisdom, leadership, courage,

compassion or other virtues which later often make for success in life.

This book is an inward journey because some of the resources that we most need in order to face the challenges which life presents to us, could only be found within ourselves.

Personal change is not about knowledge or erudition but about motivation, as it is only people who feel truly motivated who will make the necessary effort to bring into flower what had remained hidden and unexplored within themselves.

I invite the reader to walk with me on this road of self-discovery, in which, we progressively will learn that what is within us, is a magical and surprising realm. When we delve a little bit further into our real selves we will realize that much of the anxiety and suffering we feel in life is optional and that our basic nature is a source of Energy, Wisdom, Serenity, Joy, Creativity and Love.

MARIO ALONSO PUIG

January, 2010

1.

Reinventing yourself

“It isn’t the strongest species which survives, neither the most intelligent, but rather that which adapts best to change.”

CHARLES DARWIN

One of the hardest things to do is to be open-minded when you are exploring some ideas which challenge our usual way of thinking. We all know that what our brain is capable of perceiving is only a small part of what reality entails. However, the moment we wish to act, we tend to do it as if what we saw was the only thing that exists. How often, for example, the well-trained eye isn’t what makes out colours and shapes instantly but what discovers what people feel but don’t say. There are areas of reality which, if we were to reach them, would reveal many things which would make us live longer and with a better quality of life. It is logical that we ask ourselves why this strange situation has arisen which makes us so blind to those life opportunities, which without our awareness, are being offered to us.

Only understanding a little more about the interaction between the mind and the brain can we find an explanation

as to why the brain doesn't work at the level of efficiency that we would expect of it. We often hear that we only use 10% of our brain. This statement has no scientific base, and even if it had, we all know, in some intuitive way that we have resources, strengths and talent within ourselves which are still to be discovered.

The brain is such a complex organ that, despite only taking up 2% of our body weight, consumes 25% of our blood flow. Processes such as analysis, learning or creative thinking require a great deal of energy which comes in the form of glucose and oxygen through the blood. The most important mission that the brain has is to help us to survive.

“The brain is such a complex organ that, despite only weighing 2% of our body weight, it takes up 25% of our blood.”

More than two million years ago, *Homo habilis* survived whilst his cousins, the *parantropos* did not. The reason is simply that the first of the two developed a bigger and more efficient brain.

The task of surviving has a lot to do with the problem-solving capacity, decision making, facing challenges and learning from one's mistakes. Our ability to observe and analyse, combined with intelligence, memory, imagination and creativity, make up the foundations we need in order to face life's challenges efficiently. That said, all of these abilities and faculties are pretty much useless if we get

overcome with anxiety and worry when we come face to face with our challenges.

Whether we like it or not, someone who is overcome with emotions is intellectually dead-end.

The emotions we feel and which have such importance when we come to try to solve problems, do not come out of a void but rather have a clear and specific root. Knowing the origins of these emotions is very important if we wish to manage them effectively. This is particularly true when we find ourselves in tricky situations where we are put under a lot of pressure and in those in which our decisions can have important consequences.

When feelings like fear or desperation take hold of us we experience a kind of “brain kidnapping”, and however intelligent we may be, our intelligence will not be found anywhere. What makes most of our problems unsolvable is not the difficulty of the problem but rather the feeling we get that we are not up to the challenge, the moment we face them. For this reason, the true capacity to solve problems in a creative way lies in keeping the sufficient mental balance when these problems arise, so that we react in the best possible way and find an efficient solution.

From metallurgy we have adopted the word *resilience* which basically refers to the resistance that a metal has to being deformed. We have also adopted the word *elasticity* from the same science, which is the capacity of the metal to return to its original form when the force that has deformed it has disappeared. Steel, for example, has a