



# **BEING A HUMAN... that's enough**

## **Module 4 PSYCHOHYGIENE IN OUR LIVES**

The Handbook for The Programme Participants

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*“To definitely and courageously change what can be changed,  
to tolerate patiently what cannot be changed  
and to distinguish between what can be changed  
and what can't be changed.”*

Demosthenes

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*“Mental health is nothing else but the smell of roses  
that bloom in our hearts.”*

Osho

## Module 4 PSYCHOHYGIENE IN OUR LIVES

At present, the information, about how to best care for our health, how many vitamins we should get daily, what we should be vaccinated against, or how to be fit, flows to us.

Since childhood we are guided to the principles of body hygiene because of efforts to minimize the possibility of infectious diseases and maintain physical health. But we care less about own mental hygiene.

We forget that “the invisible” part, that is our mental well-being and mental health are also part of our health. And by caring for our mental health we can effectively prevent physical and mental illnesses.

Regular psychohygiene can positively affect the quality of our lives and the relationships with our surroundings, increase our work performance and help to experience the subjective satisfaction, in other words – feel good.

## LESSON 4.1 Mental health



Our health includes the both physical and mental components. As there are the preventive steps for our physical health, there is also the set of the principles and preventive steps to maintain our mental health.

At the same time, it is necessary to remember that the both components of our health are very closely related – one affects the other and vice versa. If we want to find out whether we are physically fit, we ask ourselves how we feel, if something hurts us, if we have had problems with something for some time, and so on. We should also ask similar questions about our mental health. We should ask how we feel mentally, whether we are fine or something has bothered us for a long time, what we cannot deal with, whether we are able to create healthy relationships where we are ourselves, feel free, etc.

World Health Organization (WHO) offers the basic criteria by which we can examine how we are doing with our mental health.

According to WHO's criteria, we are healthy mentally when:

1. we have a good attitude towards ourselves – i.e. when we do not let ourselves be overwhelmed by emotions, we do not underestimate or overestimate our abilities, we accept ourselves as we are;
2. we feel good among other people;
3. we are able to handle the demands of the life – we try to manage problems, plan things in advance, we are not afraid of future, we take advantage of the opportunities that we have.

### What if I do not feel “fit” mentally?

When we have some doubts about our physical health, we use to visit a doctor and get a medical examination. Our action says that our health is not indifferent to us and we need to take care of it.

But it sometimes happens that stress overcomes us or the problem comes that we cannot solve it by ourselves and is bothering us for long time. Then we can ask for help from the person who we trust or we can look for a specialist – a psychologist who will seek a solution with us.

It is natural to look for a help of a doctor when our leg hurts and it is so natural, too, to visit a psychologist when our “soul hurts”.



### To think about

Warning signs of a mental illness include<sup>1</sup>:

- > too intense emotions
- > total disappearance of emotions
- > inadequate emotions in the situation
- > sleep disorders
- > long-lasting loss of appetite
- > loss of pleasure from pleasant activities
- > impairment of perception of reality (hallucinations)
- > disturbance of thinking (delusions)
- > nonsensical speech
- > speeding up or slowing down speech or behaviour
- > incomprehensible behaviour
- > total loss of energy
- > rejecting contact, self-closing, shyness
- > loss of interests
- > significant neglect of self-care
- > aggressive behaviour
- > self-harm
- > attempted suicide.

Both in physical and mental illnesses is true that the sooner we start treating the disease the better the prognosis for cure.

### Lesson summary

The mental and the physical health are closely related – one affects the other and vice versa.

According to WHO's we are healthy mentally when:

- We have a good attitude to ourselves;
- We feel good among the other people;
- We are able to handle the demands of the life.

Just as it is natural to seek the help of a doctor when your leg hurts, it is just same natural to visit a psychologist when the "soul hurts".



## LESSON 4.2 My Relationship with Myself



To have a healthy good relationship with ourselves – to accept ourselves as we are, with our strengths but weaknesses, too – is necessary for our mental health. It sometimes happens that our self-acceptance or our relationship with ourselves are influenced with some more factors: our everyday experiences, results of our work, relationship with the other people and so on. Of course, not all circumstances are positive, therefore it may happen that we sometimes feel inferior, unnecessary or ignored what affects also our mental health.

Each of us has its value that does not depend on criteria (beauty, kindness, intelligence or skills) that are set by the others. We have our value regardless we have accomplished some task successfully or we have completely failed, whether we are in the sport team or we are the “sport clumsy”, whether we have many friends or few, and so on.

The life will be more funny for us if we love and value ourselves more. At the same time, it is not about the reconciling our shortcomings in terms of: “Yes, I take drugs, steal, lie, but whatever, I am like that.” It is about a confession of our negative sides, so I do not deny them but I take responsibility for them and try to improve them. But I do not lose my value.

### Self-acceptance versus “the ideal of the beauty”

Self-acceptance touches not only the acceptance of our characteristic, but also of our body and appearance. Daily we are confronted with the ideal of the beauty which is presented in the media. Slim girls with perfect skin, well-built and athletic men etc. If we compared ourselves with this ideal from the media, probably we would conclude that we do not meet all “beauty criteria”.

However, our body is amazing. You just have to realize how our organs work, how they are connected, what all our body can do. But we often focus on a crooked nose, a pimple on the nose or the height which we are not satisfied with, and so on.

Do you know what conclusion plastic surgeons came to? They say if anyone is not satisfied with his nose and undergoes the plastic surgery, he/she usually does not think of himself/herself any better even after the procedure.

These people use to focus on the other part of their bodies which they think should look different. Therefore “the most effective remedy” for our shortcomings is the accepting of ourselves as we are, with our strengths and weaknesses, too.



### To think about

The following lines are the answer for a 15-year-old girl to her question<sup>2</sup>:

**“How should I prepare myself to make my life fulfilled?”**

*I am me.*

*In all the world, there is no one else exactly like me.*

*Everything that comes out of me is authentically mine, because I alone choose it.*

*I own everything about me – my body, my feelings, my mouth, my voice, all my actions, whether they be to others or to myself –*

*I own my fantasies, my dreams, my hopes, my fears –*

*I own all my triumphs and successes, all my failures and mistakes.*

*Because I own all of me, I can become intimately acquainted with me – by so doing I can love me and be friendly with me in all my parts.*

*I know there are aspects about myself that puzzle me, and other aspects that I do not know –*

*but as long as I am friendly and loving to myself,*

*I can courageously and hopefully look for solutions to the puzzles and for ways to find out more about me.*

*However, I look and sound, whatever I say and do,*

*and whatever I think and feel at a given moment in time is authentically me.*

*If later some parts of how I looked, sounded, thought and felt*

*turned out to be unfitting, I can discard that which I feel is unfitting, keep the rest, and invent something new for that which I discarded.*

*I can see, hear, feel, think, say, and do.*

*I have the tools to survive, to be close to others, to be productive,*

*and to make sense and order out of the world of people and things outside of me.*

*I own me, and therefore I can engineer me –*

*I am me and I am ok.*

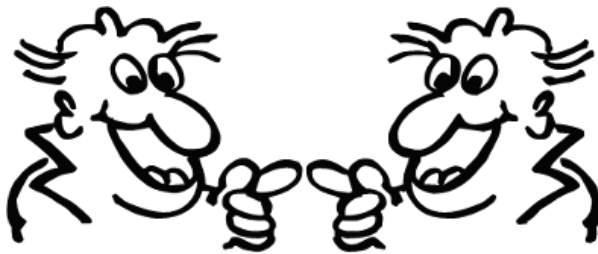
(by Virginia SATIR: My Declaration of Self-Esteem - "I Am Me")

## Lesson summary

For your mental health it is important to have a good healthy relationship to yourself – to accept yourself as you are with your strengths and weaknesses, too.

Self-acceptance touches also the acceptance of our body and appearance. It is not good to compare yourself with the ideal of the beauty from the media. Because the most of us would probably conclude that we do not meet all criteria of “the beauty”.

Each of us has its value which does not depend on the criteria (beauty, kindness, intelligence or skills), that are set by the others.



## LESSON 4.3 Me and the Others



We live our lives in close and distant relationships. How we perceive the closeness or the strength of these relationships, depends on some factors such as the frequency of meeting (or other contact), confidentiality (openness), mutual sympathy, common interests, opinions or attitudes, diversity of activities, by which I spend time with the others, the duration of the relationship, erotic attraction or mutual commitments.

What relationships we create with the other people, we influence to large extent by ourselves. Our relationships with the other are influenced in positive and negative sense with our characteristic such as credulity, airiness, mannerism, reliability, kindness, petulance, short temper, and so on. We are responsible for what relationships we create with the others. We are responsible for what we do and also what we do not do in the relationships. We use to tend to avoid taking on this personal responsibility. It sometimes seems that it is easier and more pleasantly not to take the responsibility. And so it happens that we blame the others or adverse circumstances for the bad relationships. But the other people or circumstances are always as they are. It is our interpretation if we see them as the problem. Therefore, although we are not always responsible for the situation, ***we are always responsible*** for our interpretation of the event and for our reaction.

### Am I really responsible for all my reactions?

It is hard for us to admit the fact that we are responsible for all our reactions. Especially if our response was wrong.

One adviser uses the following comparison<sup>3</sup>: *Imagine the orange. What can leak out from it, when we squeeze it out with love? Orange juice. And what will leak out from the same orange when we treat it down? The orange juice. And when we throw the orange on the wall? The orange juice again. The orange is not “responsible” for what we are doing with it, but it is “responsible” for what it gives out. It always answers with that what is inside it. We are equally responsible for what is inside us – our thoughts, interpretations, attitudes, and everything what comes out from us.*

There is no point in arguing just because the other one started. We can also answer with something else than quarrel or war. Chasing after the poisonous snake, which has bitten us, will cause the poison is absorbed more quickly into our body. It is much better to take immediate action to remove poison.

Instead of arguing we can decide how to interpret the situation and response and how to react. For example, we can ask ourselves, to what extent the action of the other person was only a response to our previous behaviour. As we mentioned in the last module, our behaviour can decide whether we start a cycle of competing steps leading to the conflict escalation or, the other way, a cycle of cooperating steps leading to an agreement and good relationships.

### **What does it exactly mean to have a healthy relationship?**

Have you ever thought about what it exactly means to have a healthy relationship? What does characterize this relationship? For example, if I often have conflicts with my parents, friends, does it mean that our relationship is broken, that is not healthy? Not necessarily.

However, in an interpersonal relationship, two personalities, with different needs, experiences and expectations, come into intense contact, so it is very natural that some conflicts and misunderstandings come. Avoiding these conflicts at all costs (even at the expense of suppressing your own needs and opinions) might look outward as an idyllic relationship, but tension would hoard inside ourselves and once explode like a volcano.

So how do we know that we live in healthy relationships, or how to find out where our relationships have reserves to work on?

There are many definitions but we will mention just a few indicative features. The healthy relationship (partner or friendly) we live when we understand each other, support each other in the goals and dreams, when we respect the other's opinions even if we disagree with them. When we can share our feelings and desires with the others, and at the same time we make space for the other's feelings and desires, we can forgive the other and not hurt him/her wittingly, when we feel free in the relationship – free to express our opinions, but also free to demand our space and privacy.



### ***To think about***

The golden rule is: “Everything you want people to do to you, do to them too.”

Keep it and build the relationships full of understanding, support and love.

### **Lesson summary**

We live our lives in close and distant relationships.

We are responsible for what relationships we create with the others. We are responsible for what we do and also what we do not do in the relationships.

Although we are not always responsible for the situation, we are always responsible for our interpretation of the event and our reaction.

We live a healthy relationship when we understand each other, support each other in the goals and dreams, when we can respect the other’s opinions even if we disagree with them. When we can share our feelings and desires with the others, and at the same time we make the space for the other’s feelings and desires, we can forgive the other and not hurt him/her wittingly, when we feel free in the relationship.



## LESSON 4.4 Stress in My Life



When we talk about the factors which affects our mental health, we must mention the stress because we cannot escape from it. Stress is omnipresent. It comes as the response to increased load or threat, or expectation of threat.

Everyday life places on us different demands that we have to cope with.

Daily we solve problems which comes, try to take advantage of opportunities that are offered to us or we plan and create our own future. In all this, stress is our faithful companion. This stress we can divide into natural, **activating stress** – **Eustress** and harmful, **negative stress** – **Distress**.

### **Eustress**

Optimum stress level works as a creative and motivational power that leads us to do incredible performances and to achieve our goals. We experience eustress before an important meeting, performance or under new conditions. We feel our forces mobilizing, how we are able to “overcome ourselves”. There comes the new balance after the eustress.

### **Distress**

It is a long-time, harmful stress which can be very dangerous and can harm mental and physical health. While a reasonable level of the eustress increases efficiency, the effect of distress has the opposite effect on the performance. While with the eustress we experience the pleasant tension and then enjoy the goal, with the distress we begin to lose our sense of security, we feel overloaded, despair, helplessness.

Stress can also be differentiated according to the intensity at **Hypostress**, which is weaker and the organism can get used to it, and **Hyperstress**, which goes beyond the limits of adaptability and cause failure, mental or physical collapse, in extreme cases, death.

We all have own limits of manageable stress. However, it is important for everyone to be in touch with ourselves, to recognize our own stress symptoms and to ventilate the stress, to work with it, or even to use it for your own benefit.

## Me as a source of stress

Sources of the stress are everywhere around us – at school, in the family, in interpersonal relationships, outside on the street (e.g. incapable driver in the car in front of us, slow queue at a cash desk, etc.). At the same time, we make considerable stress by ourselves – we cannot accept our shortcomings and stress ourselves with negative ideas about ourselves, we misinterpret what is happening around us, quite differently we understand the statements of the others as originally meant, and so on. We are unnecessarily flooded with negative emotions and these increase our worry and inner tension, “our nerves crack” and the stress crawls under our skin.

What to do then, when our look in the mirror is more stressful than a test at school, or awareness of my negative qualities worries me more than the motionless queue at the cash desk. What to do when we are the cause of the stress by ourselves?

One of the tools that we have got in our hands is our own systematic self-education, which involves target self-knowledge and work on self-acceptance, managing own thoughts, active problem solving, non-avoidance of responsibility or acquiring effective forms of self-relaxation.

## Stress symptoms

Stress often contributes to many symptoms of physical and mental discomfort.

**Physical stress symptoms include:** a headache, sleep disorders, squeezing behind the sternum, changes in the menstruation cycle, palpitation, muscle cramps, tension, back and neck pain, sexual disorders, flatulence in the abdominal part, frequent urge to urinate, gnashing while sleeping, fatigue, constipation or diarrhea, increase in blood pressure, pimples on the face, digestion disorders, loss of appetite or overeating, discomfort in the throat, and so on.

**Emotional reactions to stress include:** ire, anger, frustration, feelings of helplessness, temper, inability to show emotional affection, different phobias, depression, reluctance to get up from bed in the morning, impatience, fluctuating anxiety, restlessness, sudden feeling turnovers, sharp mood changes, excessive dreaming, and limiting contact with other people, paying attention problems, etc.





### To think about

*One day a fisherman was lying on a beautiful beach, his fishing rod was fixed in the sand and the bait was thrown into a brilliant blue surf. He was enjoying the warm morning sun and imagined what a fish he could catch.*

*In a while a successful entrepreneur was passing by, he wanted to relax from the stress of a busy day. He saw a fisherman sitting on the beach and decided to ask him why he was spending his time this way instead of finding a proper job to take care of himself and his family.*

*“You won’t catch any fish this way”, the entrepreneur told the fisher. “You should work hard and not just lie on the beach.”*

*The fisher looked at the entrepreneur and asked: “And what would I get of it?”*

*“Well, you could buy larger nets and catch more fish.” The entrepreneur answered.*

*“And what would I get of it then?” the fisher asked with a smile.*

*The entrepreneur answered: “You would make money and then you could buy a boat. Then you would catch even more fish!”*

*“But what would I get of it?” the fisher asked again.*

*The entrepreneur already started to be angry after these questions: “You could buy the bigger boat and hire employees who would work instead of you.”*

*“Well, but what would I get of it, still?” the same question sounded from the fisher.*

*The entrepreneur was angry: “Don’t you understand me? You could buy the whole fleet of fishing boats, sail around the world and let your employees to work instead of you!”*

*The fisher already asked the same question again: “And what would I get of it then?”*

*The entrepreneur started to shout all red to the fisher: “You don’t understand anything at all. Then you would be so rich that you wouldn’t have to work at all. You could sit on this beach all days then, and watch the sunset and you would have no worries!”*

*The fisher, still smiling, said: “And what do you think, what am I doing just now?”<sup>4</sup>*

## Lesson summary

Stress is omnipresent, it comes as the response to increased load or threat, or the expectation of threat.

We can divide the stress into the natural, activating stress – eustress and harmful, negative stress – distress. Stress can also be differentiated according to the intensity at hypostress a hyperstress.

We often make considerable stress also by ourselves. But this behaviour does not help us. The long-time negative stress often participates to the origin of many symptoms of physical and mental discomfort.

We all have own limits of manageable stress. However, it is important for everyone to be in touch with ourselves, to recognize our own stress symptoms and to ventilate the stress, to work with it, or even to use it for your own benefit.



## LESSON 4.5 How to ventilate stress



In the next story we will show how our body works in the stressful situation.

*This story happened 19 thousand years ago. A prehistoric man named Hugo met a tiger during wandering through a forest.*

*This meeting was not pleasant for either side. It was clear that either the tiger would have a dinner, or Hugo a new tiger coat.*

*The body of the man immediately prepared for the fight. His breathing speeded up, his heart began to beat stronger and pumping blood to the skeletal muscles at a higher frequency. Smooth muscles, on the contrary, contracted, digestion and similar activities must wait at this time. The endocrine glands, that have released such substances into the blood which he could get needed energy from the muscles, helped Hugo in the brutal struggle.*

*When the man had overpowered the tiger, he went to say this happy news to his friends. They were all very happy about this news and they right congratulated Hugo. The man curled up then in the cave under the protection of his band, he covered himself with fur and had a rest. And even though it was not yet night, he got in a state of sedation, relaxation and half-sleep after the debilitating match.<sup>5</sup>*

The summary of the reactions, that happened in the body of the prehistoric man in the fight with the tiger, is called the stress reaction or, simply, the stress. The stress reaction was for Hugo necessary for survival in that situation. At the same time, we must to remember, after the stress reaction the relaxation phase is inevitable, in which we will renew our strength so that we can continue to function normally. This phase is as important for the survival as the stress response. The body recovers during the relaxation, exhausted energy sources recover, wounds begin to heal better. Although, we rarely fight for our own bare life at this time, we need to ventilate our stress so that it does not build up inside us. There is not any “vent” universally valid and effective for all people. As we are all unique, so are our ways of venting stress unique.

To know our own methods with which I can have a rest and relax the best after the hard day, forms the part of our self-knowledge. Do not forget, it is important not only whether we ventilate the stress but even what ways of the ventilation we use and how they affect our health and quality of our lives in the long run.

## How to healthy ventilate stress in our lives?

When we already know how to identify the stress according to the symptoms and to determine the source of our stress, we can do these two things (or combine them):

1. to solve the problem and this way to eliminate the source of the stress;
2. to cope with the stress and to ventilate it continuously, so that it does not accumulate inside ourselves.

It is necessary for us to prepare the own list of the ways with which we can healthy ventilate the stress in our lives.

The most common *healthy ways of managing or ventilating stress*, as well as recovering the strength are<sup>6</sup>:

- ✓ actively organize your life - organize your time;
- ✓ maintain a healthy lifestyle (enough sleep, appropriate diet, care of body hygiene, alternate duties and entertainment, work and rest, alternate different activities);
- ✓ be resolute and to know what you want;
- ✓ act according to your priorities;
- ✓ control yourself, resist temptation, do not do harmful activities;
- ✓ supply your basic life needs;
- ✓ overcome obstacles, do not avoid them;
- ✓ work with your emotions, express what you feel with the respect to yourself and also to the others;
- ✓ have the active approach to the life, feel the responsibility for what is happening with yourself;
- ✓ receive yourself, trust your skills and believe in the future success;
- ✓ think positive, be the optimist;
- ✓ encourage the friendly feelings and attitudes in yourself;
- ✓ look for and find the sense of your life;
- ✓ be able to enforce your legitimate requirements and to refuse unjustified demands without guilt;
- ✓ have friends and known people who support you in the difficult life situations;
- ✓ seek a professional help if it is necessary;
- ✓ physical movement (journeys, sport, dance, walking, active rest e.g. work in the garden);

- ✓ stay in nature;
- ✓ experience the success, succeed something of value to me;
- ✓ stay in cheerful society – contact with people who you have good relationships with;
- ✓ entrust the problems to the closest people, parents, relatives, partner;
- ✓ write the diary – positive effect needn't to be shown with immediate mood improvement, but the long-time doing this activity supports the mental health, helps to self-knowledge and coping with unpleasant emotions (by not suppressing them, naming them and identifying their source);
- ✓ take care of pets – it increases mental resistance and life satisfaction;
- ✓ pursue hobbies, create something;
- ✓ relax – it means induce mental relaxation through the muscles relaxation;
- ✓ engage in pleasant imagine and thoughts – for example, nice memories, plans, fantasies;
- ✓ activate yourself – i.e. induce the optimal conditions (feeling of strength, freshness, energy) for a certain output, e.g. with a short body exercise;
- ✓ massage – it helps to relax the muscles of the neck, shoulders and back, where the tension after the stress often persists;
- ✓ humour – read a funny story, watch a comedy, fun show;
- ✓ work with your breath – the way we breathe affects our psyche;
- ✓ art – expressing own feelings by using amateur or professional artistic activities (read and/or write fiction, read and/or write poetry, listen to and/or active create or reproduce music, watch theatre plays, play at theatre, watch a movie, paint, dance, and so on.).

Although we talk about the healthy ways how to prevent the stress or to ventilate it, we must remind that also these ways may have their risks and we need to maintain a healthy rate and form.

At the same time, the harmlessness of these procedures depends on the context (environment, atmosphere, willingness, intensity, aim etc.), in which they are carried out. For example, if they are practised in the groups based on the religious fanaticism (often “to attract victims” – submission to the group and its ideology), the positive contribution of these practices in the long term is highly questionable, even harmful. On the contrary, in the healthy groups similar or identic techniques can support the development of the free deciding personality.

**Harmful ways of managing or ventilating stress**, as well as recovering the strength include:

- taking drugs (nicotine, alcohol and other illicit drugs, as well as psyche-influencing drugs that are not coordinated by a doctor);
- unprofessionally performed hypnosis or autosuggestion;
- unprofessionally realized or exaggeration of any relaxation technique;
- psychotherapy and other techniques abused within groups with sectarian characters, so called brain washing;
- illegal and aggressive sports (battle clubs, different kinds of fights etc.)
- and many others.

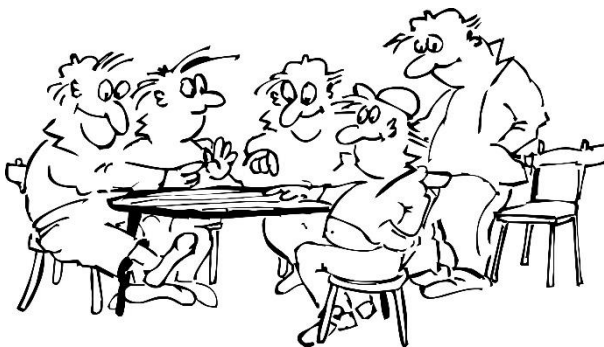


### **To think about**

*There lived some older men in Japan, they used to meet to talk together and to drink some tea. Their biggest hobby was to look for exclusive types of tea and make delicious taste mixtures.*

*When the duty of the host falls on the oldest member of the club, he measured the tea leaves from golden bowl and served the tea with the utmost ceremony. Everyone praised the tea very much and wanted to know which types of the tea he chose to the mixture to achieve such an excellent taste.*

*The old man smiled and said: "Gentlemen, the tea you like so much, the peasants on my farm drink. The best things in the life are neither expensive nor difficult to find."<sup>7</sup>*



## Lesson summary

After the stress reaction the relaxation phase is inevitable, in which we will renew our strength so that we can continue to function normally. This phase is as important for the survival as the stress response.

When we identify the stress in our lives and we also know to determine the source of our stress, we can:

1. solve the problem and this way to eliminate the source of the stress;
2. cope with the stress and to ventilate it continuously, so that it does not accumulate inside ourselves.

It is important to choose such ways of ventilating the stress which affect our health and quality of our lives in the long run.

As we are all unique, so are our ways of venting stress unique. It is necessary for us to prepare the own list of the ways with which we can healthy ventilate the stress in our lives.



## LESSON 4.6 I Think, Therefore I Am...



Everything in our lives is affected with the way we use our mind. Infinite stream of thoughts which flows through our mind is gradually transformed into our feelings, attitudes, words and actions.

The more often we have an idea, the more likely it is to become our thought model, and from our thoughts becomes a habit. Therefore, it is important to take care of your mind, to influence what we think about, what we focus our attention on. Because what we allow to take roots in our mind, that we will eventually become.

There is a story often told among traders that is attributed to the world shoemaking company Baťa and its two sellers.

*Two sellers were sent to a large remote island to sell shoes. The first seller was shocked and very disappointed after the coming – he found out that almost nobody wears the shoes. He immediately sent a telegram to the office of its management in Chicago: “I’m coming back tomorrow. Nobody wears shoes here.”*

*The other seller, staying elsewhere on the island, had a different opinion about the situation – he was very excited. The next day he sent an urgent telegram to Chicago: “Send me 10 000 pairs of shoes. Everybody here needs the shoes!”<sup>8</sup>*

The same situation, the same environment, but a completely different reaction. Where one of them saw only a problem, the other one saw the opportunity. We can say that the first seller’s attitude was rather negative, but the other seller was thinking positive.



### To think about

The effective way how to fulfil your mind with positive ideas and to be more satisfied in your life, is to master the following technique of gratitude.

On the next walk, find a stone which you will like, it will be interesting or attract you with something. Its size should be just right ☺. Take this stone with yourself, put it in your pocket and keep it still at you. It will be your **gratitude stone**.

From now, always when you see this stone or you touch it in your pocket, remember at least one thing which you are really thankful for in your life.



You certainly have many things that you are grateful for in your life – health, family, friends, talent and so on.

Many of these things we often take for granted and we are completely unaware that we could lose them sometimes. Your gratitude stone will remind you all these goods in your life. The following story can be the inspiration for you:

*Two friends went across the desert. But they had an argument before and one slapped the another. The slapped one, without any words, bent down and wrote in the sand: "Today, my best friend slapped me." They went on and came to the wonderful oasis with a pond and decided to have a bath. The slapped one started to drown, but the another saved him and pulled him out of the water. When he awoke, he carved the stone: "Today, my best friend saved my life." The friend asked him: "When I slapped you, you wrote it in the sand and now, you have carved it in the stone. Why?" He answered: "You know, when someone hurts me, I write it only in the sand in order to wind blows the lines away as a sign of forgiveness. But when someone helps me, I carve it in the stone to stay it there forever."*

Learn also you to write your grief and grievances into the sand and your happiness and gratitude to carve in the stone.<sup>9</sup>

### Lesson summary

Everything in our lives is affected with the way we use our mind. Infinite stream of thoughts which flows through our mind is gradually transformed into our feelings, attitudes, words and actions.

It is important to take responsibility for our thoughts, to influence what we think about and what we focus our attention on. What we allow to take roots in our mind, that we will become.

The effective way how to fulfil our mind with positive ideas and to be more satisfied in our lives, is to master the technique of gratitude – be grateful for all goods in our lives.

## MODULE 4 SUMMARY

As well as it is important to take care of our physical health, so it is also important to take care of the mental health. The good mental health supports our physical health, improves concentration, memory and all mental processes. It strengthens immunity, supports better work performance. It deepens the feelings of joy in our relationships and leads to the feeling of a fulfilled and happier life.

Psychohygiene, which the main goal is to establish the mental balance, is important for maintaining and enhancing the mental health. And how can we achieve the mental balance? Very helpful it is to keep the main principles of the psychohygiene, which are: a good lifestyle – a moderate diet, appropriate physical activity, having a rest and a good time management.

And what to do if we fail to establish the mental balance? Then it is good to visit a therapist who can help us to find the best solutions for us. He/she will be our guide who we can overcome the crisis with, start our inner power and who will learn us how to solve the difficult situations effectively, or how to avoid them.

Take care of our inner garden. As the Indian mystic Osho says: *“Mental health is nothing else than a smell of roses that bloom in our hearts.”*



## NOTES

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