

"...Fast-moving, enjoyable... shows you how to be happy..."

– Brian Tracy

THE ART & SCIENCE BEHIND DEVELOPING
ONE OF LIFE'S MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS
– IN 5 SIMPLE HACKS!

**I DON'T
WANT TO BE
HAPPY**

**COLOR
EDITION**

**- SAID NO ONE,
EVER!**

BY SHADÉ ZAHRAI

"WARNING:

*This is NOT your typical cheesy, preachy how-to book...
...put this on your required reading list."*

Dr Ginni Mansberg – GP, Medical Journalist & Channel 7 TV Presenter

ADVANCE PRAISE

"This fast-moving, enjoyable book shows you how to be a happy, busy, self-fulfilled person – in every area of your life."

Brian Tracy

International Bestselling Author, Author – Maximum Achievement

"If anyone has insights into being happy, it's Shadé."

Adam Spencer

Author, Comedian & Former Triple J Radio Presenter

"WARNING: this is not your typical cheesy, preachy how-to book. It's so much more. Shadé has created a remarkably simple, insightful book that is delightfully different, infused with humor, sensitivity, warmth and a great deal of value. If you care about your relationships and want to be more successful in work and life, put this book on your required reading list."

Dr Ginni Mansberg

GP, Channel 7 TV Presenter & Author

"Shadé has written a simple, easy to read book around the key concepts of positive psychology. Full of personal anecdotes and stories, it covers the basics that we need to put into practice to deliver a happier, more fulfilling life. She brings critical research to life in a fun and engaging way, helping you realize that happiness is your choice - you are the architect! Thanks for this delightful contribution Shadé."

Sue Langley

Neuroscience Expert & CEO of Langley Group

"The path to living a successful and happy life is spelled out here in this book. Shadé makes the complexity of creating a fulfilling life very simple by using science, wisdom and her own personal stories. This is a must read for anyone who wants to take charge of their life to live abundantly and happily."

Tom Cronin

Founder of The Stillness Project, Speaker & Writer

"This book will transform how you think. More importantly, it will transform your life. A revelation."

Andy Bounds

Award Winning Sales Expert & Best Selling Author

"Shade stylistically guides us through utilizing effective ideologies, methods, anecdotes and research, toward becoming the decider, the architect and the captain of your life. A Fantastic and important book to read no doubt!"

Jack Delosa

Founder & CEO of The Entourage (BRW Young Rich List since 2014)

"A wonderful book! Through her enchanting personal experiences and powerful enablers, let Shadé steer you to become the Architect of your life!"

Mark D'Silva

Author of 'Zing! Speak like a Leader

"One could say that we already have enough books advising us how to be happy. But one could also argue that there's always room for another one if it offers a new and different approach. Shadé's contribution is certainly interesting and fresh; and I very much hope it helps more people to enjoy happiness and a good life."

Dr. Tim Sharp (aka. Dr. Happy)

International Leader in Positive Psychology, Speaker & Founder of The Happiness Institute

"In this warm and engaging book Shadé demonstrates that happiness is a choice and shares simple yet effective ways to make this choice. It's skillfully written with a rare mix of wisdom, fun and proven research, offering you an easy guide to lead a happier, more fulfilling life - and the graphics will keep you engaged to the end!"

Stacey Copas

Australia's #1 Keynote Speaker on Resilience & Author of 'How To Be Resilient

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BY SHADÉ ZAHRAI

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**“I want you
to be Happy...
to Laugh,
Smile and Rejoice
in order that others
may be made
Happy by you.”**

– ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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PREFACE

**“Success is not the key to happiness.
Happiness is the key to Success.”**

- Albert Schweitzer



So, you're probably thinking: "*Why is happiness so important?*" It's a very good question, especially since I'm the one who believes in it so much that I decided to write a book on it. It's important because, quite simply, it's the center of everything. It determines so much. It is the cause of so much. And, we are the ones who decide whether it plays a role in our lives or not. We are the ones who choose. But, it seems that so many have forgotten this simple fact.

There are two things I've noticed in our world. The first is that it seems that people everywhere are unhappy. They're miserable. They're going to jobs they dislike, doing work they despise, wondering why their success at work hasn't brought the happiness they thought it would, or maybe they are so miserable they aren't achieving any kind of success at all. They rarely get quality time with family and loved ones, have strained relationships as a result and are left questioning, "*Is this it?*" Heck, I was even wondering this some time ago as I sat on the train to work, surrounded by the 'corporate sardines' (it's always packed on my train line..). It's no way to live.

My second observation is that people have become despondent. They've given up. They've become like passengers in their lives, feeling like they're just along for the ride. No drive. No motivation. No momentum. Day in and day out, it's the same thing. **Wake up - Eat - Go to Work - Do the Work - Come Home - Dinner - Sleep.** And the next day? Repeat.

It doesn't help that we have developed an obsession with always being attached to our smart phones, our iPads and our laptops. We now live in a world where we're 'always-on'. Always connected. Always accessible. Always distracted. Email. Twitter. Instagram. Facebook. It's all-pervasive and it's becoming increasingly more difficult to escape from its all-encompassing grip. Just look around next time you're on public transport – I guarantee most people will be totally consumed in their device. As a result of 'stimulation overload', we've also developed somewhat of an attention deficit challenge... we basically have the attention spans of goldfish thanks to the ability to tap and swipe our way to something more interesting online.

PRETTY BLEAK OUTLOOK IF YOU ASK ME.

So, I wanted to do something about it. People needed to get a metaphorical 'kick up the backside' to realize that they had given away all of their power. They had succumbed to the evil grip of society, of comparing themselves to others and being miserable. Unfulfilled. Unsatisfied. Unhappy.

My desire for this book is to provide a glimpse into how easy it is to transform your life. Seriously, it's remarkably simple! But first, you need an understanding of the basics of Neuroscience and psychology and how it applies to our brains. Once you get this part, it makes it all seem so much easier. Trust me on this.

I Don't Want to Be Happy – said no one ever! invites you to explore the science behind how to transform your mind and life for the better. It aims to teach you how to train your mind and heart towards greater happiness and wellbeing in your daily life. It all starts with your thoughts. And, because I know you would probably get bored by page 3 if it didn't capture your attention in some engaging way, I've designed it so it's full of graphics to keep your brain at attention. Not too heavy but enough to satiate your curiosity. It's fresh, snappy, covers the key points that you need to kick-start your transformation and is super practical. No excuses now.

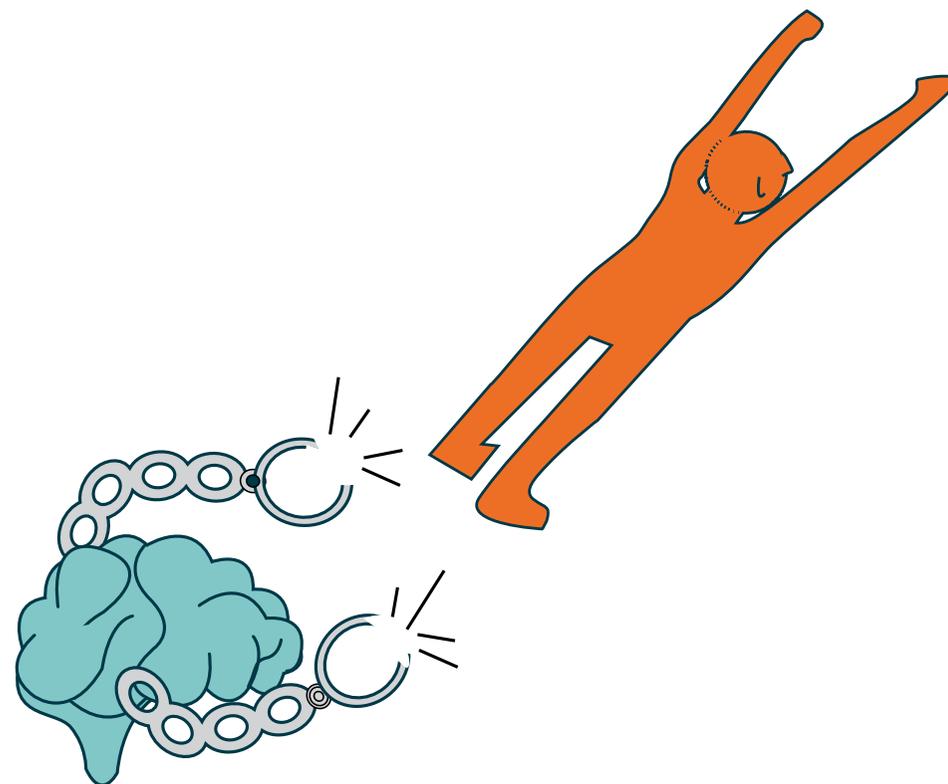
Your greatest and most precious resource is, without any shred of a doubt, your mind. Just as you'd go to the gym to keep your physical body in top condition, you should also be exploring ways to keep your mind in the best possible condition. Why? Well because (as some of you can surely relate) your mind can be the source of immense trauma, emotional baggage, or the darkest depression. Or, it can be a light – a source of positive energy, of motivation, of joy. When in this state, it becomes a

resource for your deepest and most lasting happiness, which leads to greater fulfillment, life satisfaction and (*wait for it...*) success. It improves the quality of your relationships, changes your perspective and helps you continually grow and develop.

"BEING HAPPY IS NOT SOMETHING YOU ARE,

IT'S SOMETHING YOU DO."

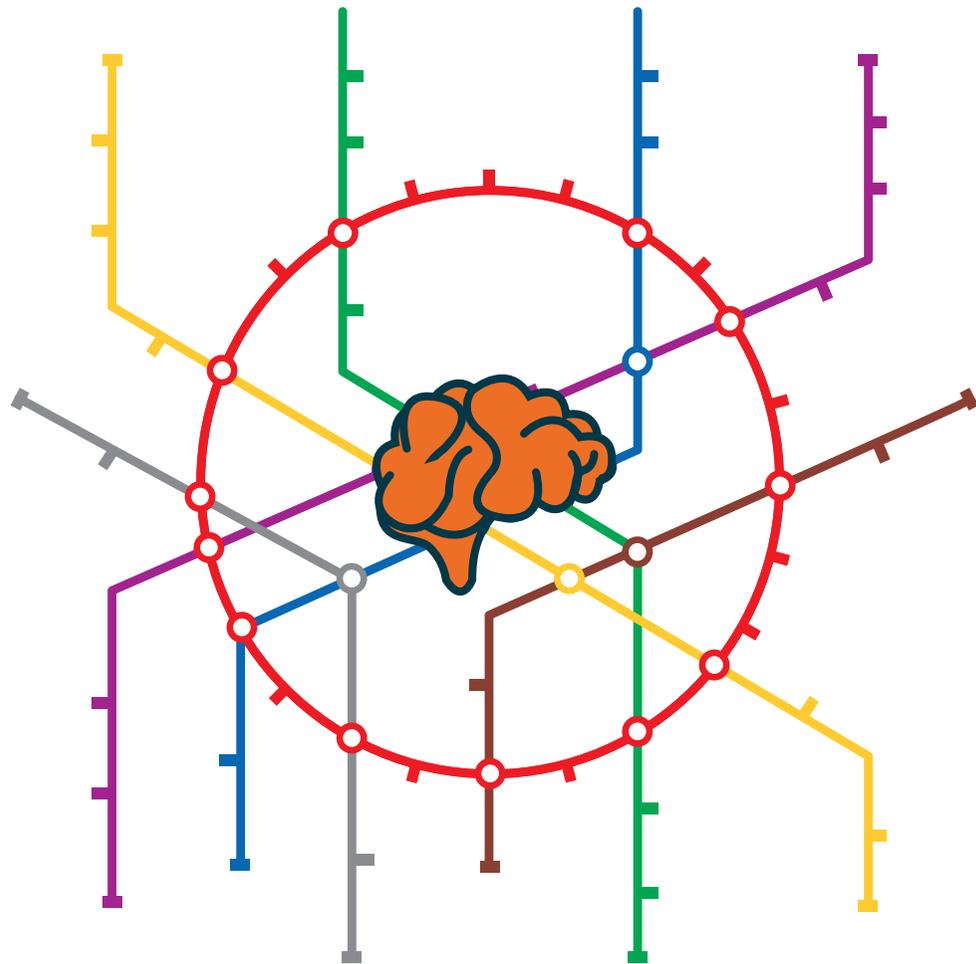
Happiness is at the center of everything. It's the key to success. If I've learned one thing, it's that being happy is not something you are, it's something you **do**. It requires a certain consciousness, a level of self-awareness. It involves a way of thinking, feeling and acting that is aligned, and if you can master it – *which I absolutely believe you can* – you'll be able to master your life. But you first have to choose to make a change. Become the Architect of your Life. I invite you to embark on the journey of taking back control. It's your life – you design it how you want it to be. **It's now or never.**



INTRODUCTION

**"Happiness in intelligent people
is the rarest thing I know."**

- Ernest Hemingway



INTRODUCTION

Every good learning experience has it's beginning.

HERE'S MINE...



It was Tuesday morning. The weather was fresh, colder than usual given the time of year. I arrived at the train station a little later than normal (thanks to my love-hate relationship with my 'snooze' button), so I knew that the train would be packed. Making my way down the stairs to the platform, I yanked at my coat collar to protect my neck from the wind chill. I watched as the train pulled into the station, slowed to a stop and opened its doors. Crowds wedged through the door panels in search of the few remaining seats. Prime real estate.

I waited until everyone made their way through before I stepped onto the train, doors closing behind me with that familiar mechanical beeping rhythm. The train jolted to start as I scanned the carriage. There was one remaining seat within reach from where I stood. After a quick glance around to confirm it hadn't been 'visually claimed' by a fellow commuter, I squeezed through the crowd who seemed to pity me struggling with my oversized handbag, backpack and briefcase. Note to self: Start using the lockers at work.

YES, I GOT A SEAT!

Making eye contact with the lady I'd be sitting next to, I smiled, as if to seek her permission while simultaneously expressing my thanks, all in a single moment of silent communication. I had a tendency to do this – to break the isolation of 'passenger solitude' through a subtle attempt of communication: a fleeting moment of connection.

I slipped my handbag strap off my shoulder and removed my backpack then eased into the vinyl seat, placing both bags and my briefcase on my lap. Careful not to disturb my co-passenger, I fumbled with my personal



items until I managed to pull my tangled headphones from my handbag. I connected the cable to my phone to play my morning soundtrack. I closed my eyes. The peace before the storm of the work day ahead.

You can imagine my surprise when that same lady who only **FIVE MINUTES EARLIER had smiled back at me abruptly screamed,**



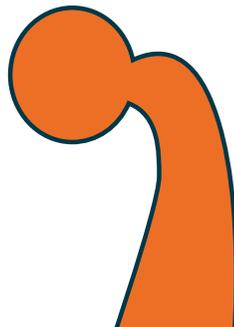
Woah, that was unexpected! Her furious eruption was harsh and loud enough to startle me over my music. I jolted to attention.

Commuters as far as the end of the carriage stared in our direction, curious to make sense of the unprovoked outburst. I couldn't understand why she was so angry with me. She continued by mumbling obscenities, as if to make an even bigger scene. I removed my earphones. Confused, I stuttered, *"I'm...I'm so sorry..."* Glancing down, I removed the briefcase, which I only then realized had slipped from its place on my lap and was resting on her upper thigh. I lifted the briefcase and positioned it on the floor between my feet then shifted my gaze, staring blankly ahead of me, while she continued to mutter under her breath.



I felt so small. I knew this feeling. I'd been here before. *I'd felt this same way 23 years earlier when my 1st Grade teacher yelled at me in front of my classmates for emptying a bucket of pencils and wearing it on my head. I thought it made a fantastic hat, but it seemed that creativity and innovation were not celebrated in that class.* This moment, being 'told off' in front of a carriage of strangers, made me feel like I was six again. My stomach knotted. I felt humiliation creep over me, a mild feeling of nausea building in my gut.

My body slumped. I felt a weird combination of shame and numbness.



OK, you may be thinking "What's the big deal here? A random lady lost it on the train. It happens." While I'm the first to admit that I'm super sensitive to being the cause of upsetting others, I promise you – there's a point to the story.

The train slowed and then pulled to a stop at my station after what felt like a lifetime of trying to be as inconspicuous as possible. I stood from my place, grabbing my three bags. I turned to the lady next to me, unsure of what I would say. Once our eyes met (and hers were still enraged), I did something that surprised me. I smiled, a truly warm, genuine smile, one that originated from deep within.

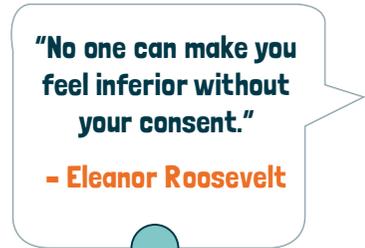
With a sudden onset of newfound confidence, I gently and sincerely said,



She gazed blankly at me, a perplexed expression washing over her harsh features. Before she had time to process, I turned around, still smiling, and made my way off the train towards my office.

I was still smiling the whole way to work.

I reflected on how this encounter had made me feel. I thought about how this complete stranger's actions had caused me to feel so insignificant, so 'in the wrong', for something that was entirely accidental and could have been resolved so effortlessly. Her abrupt tone, the harshness of her words, her insensitive approach: these all made me feel inferior to her and everyone else on that carriage. What I had done in that moment was to give her actions power over me. I allowed her words and tone to influence me, to make me feel a certain way.



At the time, I wasn't consciously aware of why I had chosen to smile at her and why I chose to continue smiling on my way to the office. This wasn't a smile to simply appear as the 'bigger person'. This smile was genuine. I 'felt' it. I meant it. It's only now on reflection that I know why it happened.

I didn't do it so much for her. Or perhaps I did. But I certainly did it for me. There was a moment when I was preparing to leave that I made a conscious decision to regain control of my emotions; to take back control of how I felt. I took a deep breath, took a moment to be present and straightened my posture. As a result, I suddenly and remarkably felt more confident, more at ease. Happier. More positive. Naturally, I wanted to share some of my positivity with her.

So as I walked to work, I began to think about how it would've been so easy for me to make a judgment about this lady, this stranger I really knew nothing about. Apart from a fleeting interaction, which, by all standards, was disappointing, I was in absolutely no position to judge her, her words or her actions. I could have easily concluded that she was just a rude, inconsiderate and self-centered person who didn't care about anyone else. Interestingly, most of us have a tendency to do this in our lives. We have a single negative interaction with another person and from their language used, the words shared or their expressions, we make all sorts of fundamental judgments about this person's character and personality.



This is such a common phenomenon that social psychologists have called it

FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR.

This happens when you judge that someone's behavior is a reflection of their personality and underestimate the possible influence of external factors.

On the train, I was in a position where I could have allowed this to happen. I could have both allowed my personal power to be stripped from me by this stranger as well as misjudged her as simply a narcissist. Neither of these would have helped me and how I was feeling.

In all honesty, I didn't know anything about this lady. I didn't know about her childhood, her family life, where she was going that morning or what had happened to her shortly before taking my seat. I didn't even know what she might have experienced immediately prior to her harsh words because I was focused entirely on my music. Maybe she had an injury on her thigh that was being aggravated by my briefcase. Maybe she had just heard some unfortunate news, and I just happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. I'll never know.

What I do know is this – at that moment I had a choice to make. I could've easily chosen to judge her. I could've allowed her tone to make me feel insignificant, as though I didn't matter. And that would've surely ruined my day.

Instead, I chose to rise above all of it. I chose not to judge, and not to make assumptions.

I shifted my focus to my breathing and being aware of what I was feeling with the intention of redefining my emotions. I centered my focus only on myself. I redirected my thoughts to something positive and managed to convince myself that I had no reason not to be happy. That I was confident. That I was strong. This positivity gave me the strength and desire to share some of it with her. It seemed that she could also use it.

Who knows... maybe my kind words before I left made her feel better about her situation. Maybe my positive parting sentiment shifted something inside her. Again, I'll never know. But, thinking this way helped me overcome the situation. It helped me be bigger. Better. Stronger.

This experience, years ago now, marked a turning point in my journey of self-learning. It made me realize that we have absolutely no control over other people's thoughts, feelings or actions. The only thing that we have control over is ourselves. How we choose to interpret the world and respond to it is entirely up to us. While our perception of what happens in the world around us will be influenced by our previous experiences (and our inherent bias, values and perceptions), we have more control over ourselves and our future than we realize.

**"We are products of our past, but we don't have to be prisoners of it."
- Rick Warren**



The term 'self-centered' carries with it negative connotations around self-absorption, selfishness and narcissism. This isn't what I mean. What I DO MEAN is that we need to become more centered on ourselves, on who we are, how we got here, how we can improve ourselves in every way and what we need to do to be better people and more valuable contributors to society.

By focusing on ourselves, we avoid living life on autopilot. By becoming centered on Self, it doesn't mean feeding our Ego. It means engaging in daily reflection and self-assessment as a conscious process of self-refinement. It involves a "twin process" of focusing on Self, and focusing on how our Self can contribute to the needs of those around us. This includes our social environments, and building healthier and more fulfilling relationships.

What is your life centered on?

In the world that we live in, we are surrounded by things screaming for our attention: the pull of social media, the pursuit of keeping up with the 'Kardashians', the next trending Netflix series, the excesses of consumerism... These all have an impact on how much time we spend investing in ourselves, in our own self-reflection and self-development. So many people I know define themselves entirely by what they have or what they do. I have colleagues who gain their life satisfaction from their jobs; from the new promotion they secured and the flashy new company car they were rewarded with. Their careers give their lives meaning.

Others I know are entirely focused on their social-media personas, concerned only with how they're perceived by their social-networks and how they measure in comparison with others. They spend their lives designing their online-presence, posting and liking, sharing and tweeting, gaining their sense of self-worth from other people's perceptions of them. A friend of mine removed a photo she had posted on social media because it hadn't received enough 'likes' in the first ten minutes.

These people have chosen to center their lives on factors external to themselves, always seeking validation and fleeting approvals from others and the instant gratification. However, where we find happiness in something external to ourselves it is only ever temporary.

The only constant in your life is YOU.



Your career can easily come to an end. Your 'cyber' persona could all too easily be tarnished. You could lose all of your Instagram followers in a day. Instead of basing your sense of self-worth on something or someone that is inherently temporary and external to yourself, you should center your life on yourself – and what is true to you.

When we become centered on Self, we focus on becoming more confident, more grounded, more resilient and more in tune with who we are.

Audrey Hepburn once wrote,

'As you grow older, you discover you have two hands:

One for helping YOURSELF,



THE OTHER FOR HELPING OTHERS.'

The harsh reality is that if we don't look after ourselves first, no one else will do it for us. If we don't make sure that we're in control of our lives, we won't be able to help others. We must center on Self to the extent that we commit to being the best person we can and gain our sense of self-worth from within.

This book is a gift to all of those people whose paths I've crossed who have shared with me that they too are on their own journey of self-development and self-discovery. They, too, want to be centered on Self – as very distinct from ego. It seems that almost everyone I've spoken with wants to be better and is searching for the tools to help them get there. I've found – at least at this early stage of my journey – that by simply understanding a few simple concepts, and not denying that we should all be centered on Self, **we can choose to be the Architects of our Future.**

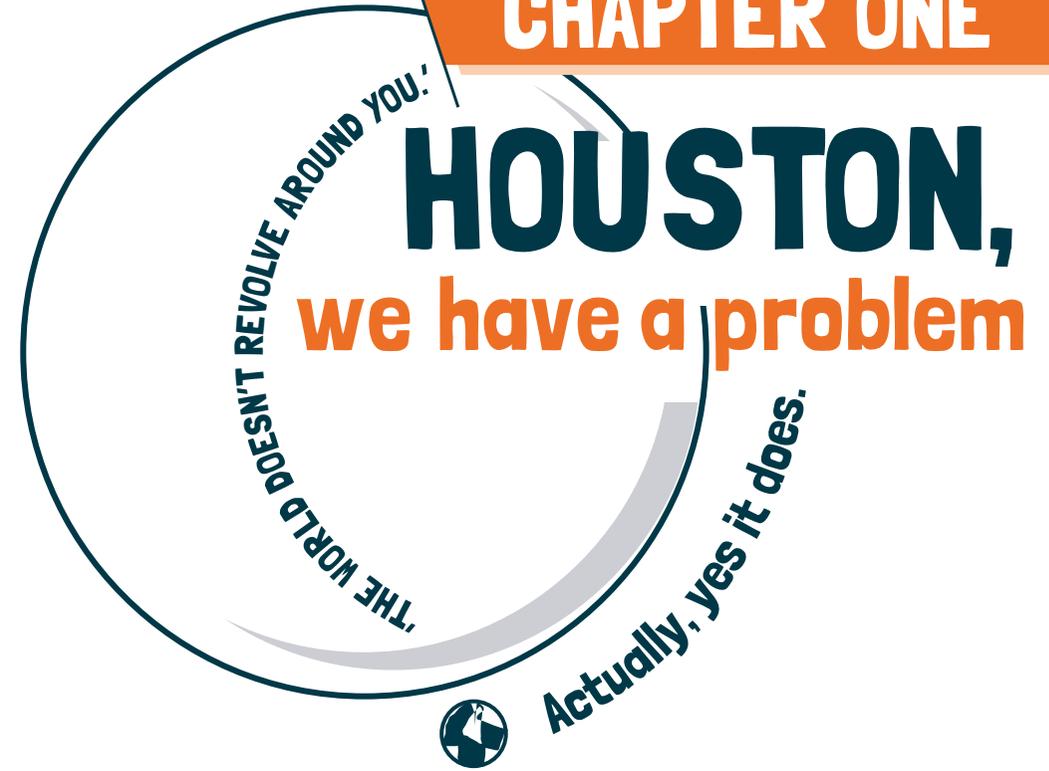
Believe in yourself.

Trust yourself.

Invest in yourself.

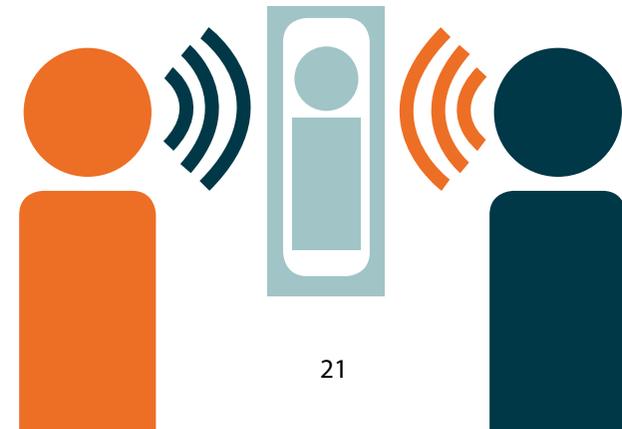
CHAPTER ONE

HOUSTON, we have a problem



The world is full of remarkable people, leading remarkable lives and doing remarkable things. We pass these people each and every day - on the street, in the cafe and at work. Yet, so many of us, entirely consumed in our selfish thoughts in our lives, miss the opportunity to connect. Connecting with someone else could be as simple as sharing a smile, wishing someone well on their day, holding a door open for someone or simply asking,

'How are you today?' and actually meaning it.



Recently I sat next to an elderly man on an early morning flight from Sydney to Perth. When I identified which seat was mine, I made eye contact, smiled and said 'hello' as a warm introduction to my co-flier for the next four hours of my life. His response wasn't anything notable. A small gesture of return and the raising of an eyebrow in acknowledgment.

I crammed my backpack and jacket in the overhead locker and fumbled with my handbag, scarf, headphones, e-Reader, charger and water bottle, careful not to allow any items to accidentally spill out onto his seat – lesson learned from last time. When I finally buckled myself in and had all my belongings in order, I pulled out my phone to switch it to airplane mode.



While doing so, I noticed a handful of small toffee candies that I had taken the previous day from a family lunch at a local restaurant - the complimentary kind you are offered at a cashier.

My family wasn't big on candy, but I happily helped myself to the lot and tossed them into my bag.

Underwhelmed by my initial brief interaction and lack of connection with 'Mr Eyebrow-Raise', I picked up one of the wrapped sweets, its red plastic wrapper crackling with my touch, and offered it to him.

He chuckled, displaying his joyous, hearty smile.

'Would you like something sweet for take-off?'

'Yes, please!'

'NEVER TOO EARLY FOR SOMETHING SWEET,' I REPLIED.

He commented how convenient it was to have a candy for take-off to assist with altitude effects:

'I find that my old ears don't handle the change in altitude like they used to.'

This simple act of connection, of bridging a gap, prefaced a whole discussion about who we were. What are we doing? Where are we going? What is important to us? He shared how he had spent many years devoting himself to his career as a financial planner, working for a high-profile media mogul and traveling first-class around the world. He stated that, unlike many other financial planners he knew and worked with, he happened to be very good at taking his own advice and had set himself up with a very comfortable retirement. He was on his fourth visit to Perth this year to catch up with old friends and next week would be traveling to Europe to his holiday home in Bologna, looking forward to having four months to take his new toy, a shiny Harley Davidson, out for a spin. We shared our views on the importance of good leadership within organizations, the value of personal development and growth, and the simple joys of the finer things in life like good food, a good book and good company.

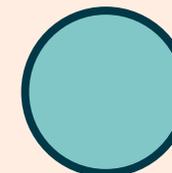
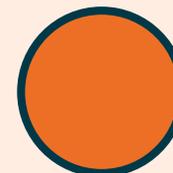
All this from the offer of a single candy...

WHEN AN EYEBROW-RAISE JUST DIDN'T FEEL RIGHT.

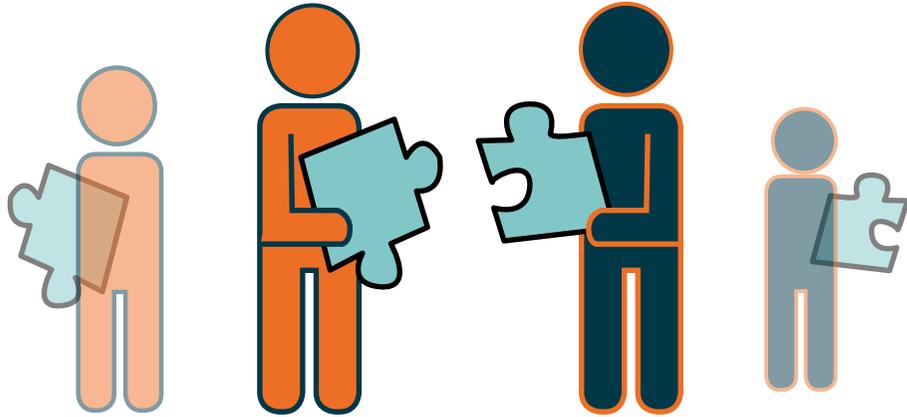
Had I not taken the step to address what I felt was an unsatisfactory introduction, the above scenario could have played out as follows.

Today I sat next to an elderly man on an early morning flight from Sydney to Perth. We took off. We landed. I left.

Uneventful, unmemorable, NORMAL.



So often, we allow ourselves to fall into the pattern of 'normal'. Of course, the question 'what is normal?' is entirely debatable. But for the purposes of the point I'm making here, 'normal' is simply how I put it before – uneventful, unmemorable, 'the norm'. We go through much of our lives content with this way of doing things. Content with being under-stimulated, too consumed by the noise of our own thoughts to engage with the world around us.



Yet by doing this, we are depriving ourselves of the joy that comes from connecting with others. We self-sabotage the potential joy of meeting and interacting with an absolute stranger, sharing a moment, learning about their lives, their life lessons, their struggles, and feeding the sapling of human connection within us that is nourished each time we share a smile with a stranger.

But how can we be open to others when we're still battling with ourselves? And how can we be present when we're still trying to understand why we react to things the way we do? Why do we feel the things we feel? Why is it that so much of 'us' is still unpredictable? This is simply because we haven't taken the time to invest in ourselves. We don't take moments to reflect on 'us', to equip ourselves with an understanding of what drives us and shapes our experience of the world.

There are certain human truths I believe all of us should be aware of: the basics, the fundamentals, the precursor to being our best selves, being content with who we are and feeling like we are in control of our future. This all hinges on an understanding of the mind and the mental and cognitive resources we have available to us.



About the Author

Shadé Zahrai is an author, consultant, former lawyer, trainer, speaker, Future Leader Scholar (through the Westpac Bicentennial Foundation) and Australian champion Latin dancer & performer featured on TED. Shadé specializes in translating brain science research into simple, actionable strategies for performance and wellbeing. She is passionate about empowering women and minorities to challenge unconscious bias, drive inclusion and advance equality in the workplace and our communities.

Her mission is to help make the world a better place

- One happy person at a time.



For more information, visit: shadezahrai.com