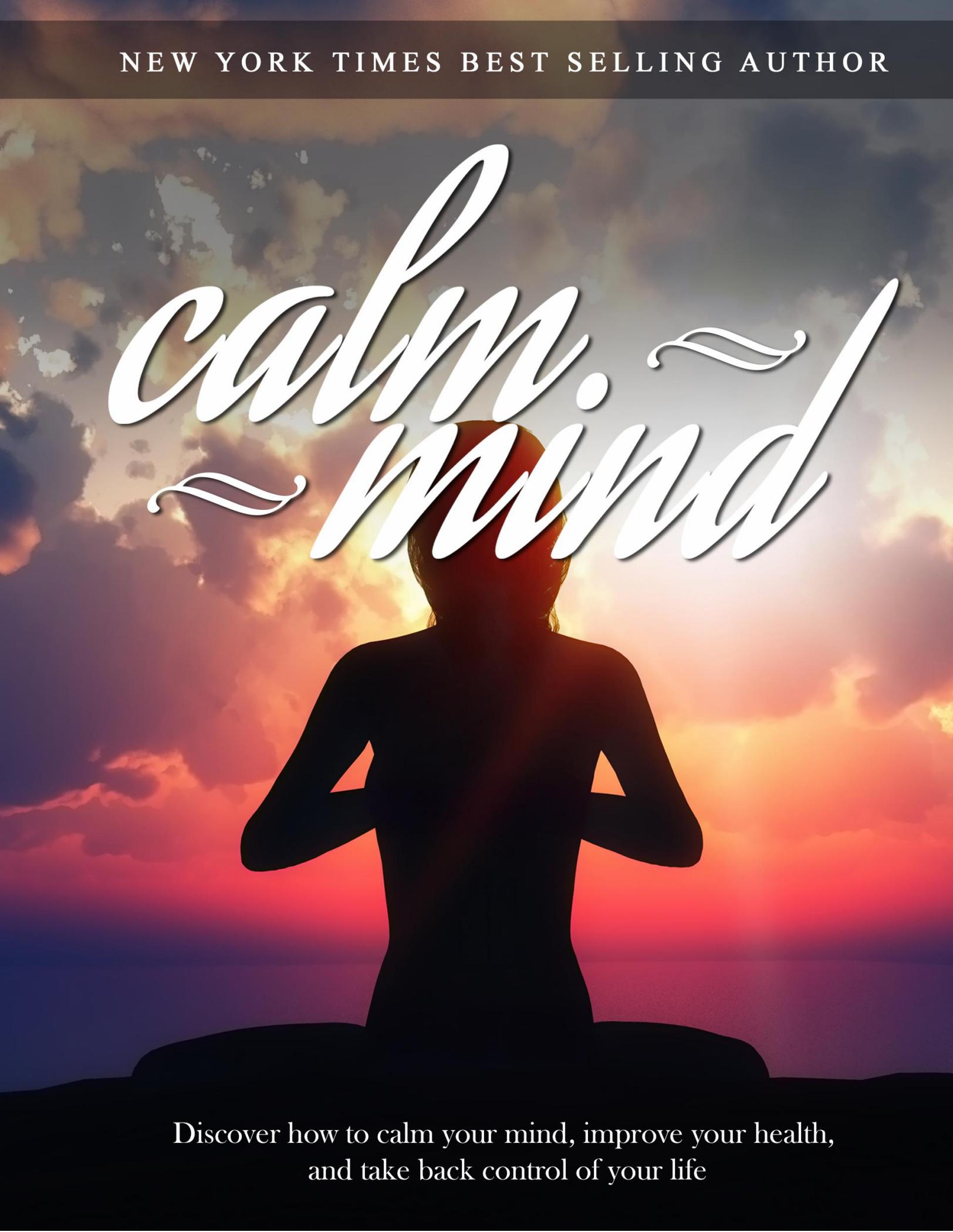


NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLING AUTHOR

calm. ~ ~ mind

A silhouette of a person sitting in a meditative pose (lotus or similar) against a vibrant sunset sky. The sky transitions from deep purple and blue at the bottom to bright orange and yellow near the horizon, with scattered white clouds. The person's arms are resting on their knees in a mudra. The title 'calm. ~ mind' is written in a white, elegant cursive font, with the person's head and shoulders partially visible behind the text.

Discover how to calm your mind, improve your health,
and take back control of your life

Calm Mind Cheat Sheet: More Powerful Techniques

In *Calm Mind, Healthy Body*, we discussed in detail the power of taking control of your mind and learning to change the way you think about different situations and events. What we learned was that our experience is really something that happens *within* more than without – and that our happiness, focus and more is all dependent on the way we interpret and react to events rather than those events themselves.

You should now understand this and have the power to use meditation and CBT to overcome those stresses.

But it doesn't end there! In fact, there are countless ways you can change your mind for the better. This cheat sheet will serve as your 'quick guide' to help you learn more!

'Fear Setting'

Fear setting is a concept that comes from author Tim Ferriss and that essentially borrows some key principles from CBT – so you should be familiar with the basics.

Essentially, fear setting is like goal setting – except you're writing down your fears instead of your goals. These are the fears specifically that are *holding you back* from particular goals. So if your goal is to launch your own business, your fears might be:

- What if I'm not successful and I get into debt?
- What if I can't support my family?
- What if my family think I'm reckless and leave me?
- What if I can't get back my old job?
- What if it blows up in my face and everyone laughs at me?
- What if I hate it?

That's step one.

Step two is to write down how likely each of those fears are to become reality and to write down the contingency plans in each scenario – what would you do if that *did* happen?

Essentially, this is just the same as using cognitive restructuring via 'thought challenging' but it's in a more structure manner.

So now you might write:

- What if I'm not successful and I get into debt? – Possible – I can live off savings/look for my old job
- What if I can't support my family? – Unlikely – We can make do off of one salary/I can ask my parents for help/I can get another job

- What if my family think I'm reckless and leave me? – Very unlikely – If it did happen, I should question the loyalty of my family
- What if I can't get back my old job? – Fairly Unlikely – But there are many other jobs I could do. Even if it means working in a supermarket for a while.
- What if it blows up in my face and everyone laughs at me? – Unlikely – I will just say 'at least I tried'
- What if I hate it? – Unlikely – I just change my job back

Suddenly, you've exposed your fears as being not worthy of your consideration. Now you know what you'll do if you do find yourself in those scenarios and you generally have robbed your concerns of the power they might have previously had over you.

And Tim Ferriss takes this technique one step further too by recommending that you write down the *opposite* fear.

What's the opposite fear in this case?

It's:

- Staying in the same job forever and never accomplishing my dreams – Likely

Which is *actually* more terrifying?

As you can see, CBT doesn't just apply to every day concerns and phobias – it can even be used to change your motivations and your goals and to help you chase after your dreams!

Visualization

The next trick we're going to look at that you can use to shape your mind the way you want it is 'visualization'. And what we're going to see here is that visualization is actually a far more powerful and integral tool than you may have previously given it credit for.

Embodied Cognition

Embodied cognition teaches us that the way we think about *everything* is linked to the sensations in our bodies and to our senses. That is to say, that the only way we understand words, is by relating it to our physical experience.

When you are born, you don't have any ability to understand English. That is to say that it's not innate and it must be learned. So what is your 'original' language that you think in? What is your brain translating English *into* so that it's native and you can understand it?

The answer is that your brain is converting the language to what it *does* innately understand: experience.

And when it does this, you can actually see the relevant areas of the brain lighting up under a brain scanner as though it were ‘happening’ to the person. When someone tells you about walking, you imagine walking and the relevant areas of your brain light up to show that you’re walking. When someone tells you about a bad day at work, mirror neurons fire as though you’re watching someone being shouted at or as though *you’re* being shouted at.

In short, we understand by ‘simulating’ the experience in our brain.

Using Visualization

And this makes visualization incredibly powerful. This is you *actively* simulating situations and as far as your brain is concerned, it’s just like it’s happening.

This now means you can use visualization in a number of ways.

One of the most common and popular uses for visualization for instance is to go to a ‘happy place’. This is one way to find an oasis of calm in a stressful day. All you’re simply doing is imagining that you’re somewhere that makes you feel relaxed and happy. That might mean that you’re sitting in an imaginary field surrounded by the sounds of animals and by beautiful flowers, or it might be that you think back to being in that situation.

At the same time though, this also means that you can use visualization as a tool in CBT. Instead of focussing on the ‘words’, go deeper and focus on the visualization. Maybe you don’t have ruminations that make you nervous to speak in public – maybe it’s more like visions!

So correct those visions. Choose how you want it to go and how it will *realistically* go. Visualize it that way and your body will produce the neurotransmitters as though it’s really happening – priming you for optimum performance.