A Novel Approach to Mind Management (Controlling One's Mental Territory)

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Abstract: Mind Management is an emerging concept in psychology that has been applied to a wide range of fields. It is based on special principles aimed at raising one's self-awareness. This practical ability leads to personal growth and development because of the training and programming of the mind, especially the subconscious mind. Considering the functional importance of the subconscious mind and its vast responsibilities, Mind Management deals largely with managing and controlling the subconscious mind. The present paper adopts a novel approach to Mind Management by introducing a new concept conceived by the authors: the Mental Territory. In this context, Mind Management is the technique of managing the Mental Territory, controlling it and finally taking advantage of the mind’s remarkable abilities to control the surrounding world. As a result, a person who practices Mind Management has the ability to deal with the challenges posed by fast-paced changes. Such a person can make the best decision in every single situation through employing the special principles of Mind Management and so controlling the mind. Overall, the intention of the authors is to answer the following three important questions: (1) Why is Mind Management needed? (Why has peace of mind been lost?); (2) What is Mind Management? (A novel approach); (3) What is needed before achieving Mind Management?

Keywords: Mind; Mind Management; Side Effects of Technology; Cognitive Psychology

1. Introduction

Every single one of us has some ambitions and dreams in life which we constantly try to achieve or fulfill. However, despite all endeavors, there are moments when we feel the results obtained are less than satisfactory and not to our liking. Thus, disappointment and hopelessness ensue, and we ask ourselves, “Indeed, what is truly the key to achieving success, impressing others, influencing the surrounding environment, as well as discovering the correct path of life?” From the authors’ perspective, the answer to this question lies in the term of Mind Management. In the following discussion, the authors elaborate on the need for Mind Management, propose a novel approach to this concept, and then explain the prerequisites for achieving it. This is accomplished by answering these key question posed:

2. Discussions

- Why is Mind Management needed? (Why has peace of mind been lost?)

The authors believe that in order to answer the question of “Why is Mind Management needed?” one should consider the hectic lifestyle of today's world. This leads to another important question that should be posed: “Why has peace of mind been lost?” It is beneficial to address this question by referring to a monologue from the movie entitled 'The Legend of 1900' directed by Giuseppe Tornatore in 1998. It is about an incredibly gifted pianist, called '1900,' who, for some reason, has never stepped foot off the ship where he was born and raised. He eventually follows his close friend's suggestion and decides to leave the ship one day for the first time and live in the city. However, strange things happen. While getting off the ship, he hesitates for a moment, takes a look at the view of the city looming in front of him and then he stops in his tracks. He changes his mind, walks back up the gangplank, and returns to the ship (Fig.1). The following is the monologue from the last moments of the movie when he explains to his close friend the reason for staying on the ship:

“You just couldn't see an end to it. The end. You please just show me where it ends? It was all very fine on that gangway. And I was grand, too, in my overcoat. I cut quite a figure and I was getting off. Guaranteed. That wasn't the problem. It wasn't what I saw that stopped me. It was what I didn't see. Can you understand that? What I didn't see. In all that sprawling city, there was everything except an end! What I did not see was where the whole thing came to an end. The end of the world. You take a piano. Keys begin, keys end. You know there are 88 of them. Nobody can tell you any different. They are not infinite, you are infinite. And on those keys, the music that you can make is infinite. I like that. That I can live by. You get me up on that gangway and roll out in front of me, a keyboard of millions and billions of keys that never end, and that's the truth, that they never end. That keyboard is infinite. And if that keyboard is infinite, then on that keyboard, there's no music you...
can play! Did you see the streets? Just the streets. There were thousands of them! How do you do it down there? How do you choose just one? One woman, one house, one piece of land to call your own, one landscape to look at, one way to die. All that world just weighing down on you. You don't even know where it comes to an end. And aren't you ever just scared of breaking apart at the thought of it? The enormity of living it? I was born on this ship. And the world passed me by, but two thousand people at a time. And there were wishes here, but never more than fit between prow and stern. You played out your happiness, but on a piano that was not infinite. I learned to live that way. Land? Land is a ship too big for me. It's a woman too beautiful. It's a voyage too long. Perfume too strong! It's music I don't know how to make. I can never get off this ship.” (Tornatore, 1998).

Also, in one of the episodes of an American adult animated series, one of the characters brings up an ironic point about technology. When encountering a world renowned entrepreneur, whose whole career is based on promoting the ever increasing advancement of technology, this character says, “We are all trying to create the future! I’m part of the future now too. You have done so much for the world. You have helped connect everyone to each other. Clearly, this is the future. But, can’t we just slow down and enjoy the present, a little longer?” (Parker & Stone, 1997).

I. The first is a simple one: Nowadays, there are great numbers of electronic device fans who use cell phones, laptops, or tablets. Whenever a new product is released, they wait in long lines to be the first to buy a popular electronic device. There is nothing to criticize about this enthusiasm. Very simply put, one cannot own an electronic device and enjoy its benefits without worrying about properly maintaining it, dealing with malfunctioning, and, more importantly, keeping it up-to-date. Therefore, an important issue arises. For example, just consider the process of updating an electronic device. If all updates are installed today, tomorrow there will definitely be messages alerting the user of more updates pending (Fig.2). In fact, the crux of the matter is there is no break in keeping up with technology and one is always struggling to keep abreast of it. Here, again resounds the monologue from Tornatore’s movie: “There is no end!”

II. Refer to Fig.3, which is a thought-provoking photo of a family who are sitting next to each other on a sofa; each is busy with a different electronic device and pays no attention to the other family members sitting right beside them. This is a true and actually alarming picture of family life in which everyone uses so many electronic devices. It is the exact opposite of what computer manufacturers usually present in advertisements: a happy family enjoying a new electronic device together. Clearly, the image of the estranged family is in sharp contrast to the main objective of technology, which is to simplify life and render it more satisfying by improving communication. However, what technology has actually succeeded in doing is to contribute to the breakdown of the family by separating its members.

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1 Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/01/fashion/01FAMILY.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
III. Despite benefiting from wonderful technological advances, one is not able to escape their side effects which disturb peace of mind. For example, due to the technological advances in the field of "news delivery" through various media, such as TV, radio, newspapers, or internet web sites, one can follow the news in many forms. Unfortunately, the news broadcast in today's world is usually negative. Watching or listening to unpleasant news, such as terrorist attacks and homicides can exert dire effects on the subconscious mind. That is because the news is peppered with negative subliminal messages—all of which may result in mental disorders. Therefore, the news is likely to generate subsequent unwanted consequences. The prediction of the world’s end on December 21, 2012 is an example of such negative news, which is followed by equally negative consequences; in this case, it was reported that some believers committed suicide out of fear of witnessing the world’s end. Therefore, in today's bombardment of information, it seems necessary to manage, organize, and filter what enters the mind, because most information is unwanted.

While acknowledging technological advances, one cannot ignore its side effects. Computer processors are becoming smaller and smaller and of course faster. However, a great paradox must be noted here. In spite of the speed technology provides, one still runs out of time to accomplish daily routines. Therefore, a problem must exist.

As a solution to this dilemma, the authors suggest maybe it is time that humans take a break from their non-stop competition with technology and see the big picture: the forgotten real place of humans in this world and more importantly, their peace of mind.

However, what is certain is that technology cannot be stopped. Only a dream weaver can talk about returning to Nature, forgetting technology, and leaving all advancements behind. The significant role that technology plays in fighting diseases, developing communication, and improving education and business cannot be denied. In fact, no other eras have been given as many opportunities to realize its dreams as the one today. Technology is needed, but one should be careful of its detrimental side effects. In other words, instead of being controlled by technology, one needs to step up and take charge. This is the way the value of mankind can be appreciated, something which is possible by finding methods to control technology and maintain peace of mind.

Therefore, the authors elaborate on the concept of Mind Management as a practical ability which is helpful in getting back on track. The reason behind this support for Mind Management is that one of the main causes of today’s current problems is a lack of awareness about the function of the mind and its extraordinary power. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, the best solution for this is to concentrate on human's real place in the world, their overlooked mental health, and, more importantly, the management of their mind.

According to Brian Tracy, “The good news is that our mind is like a muscle. It grows stronger and more capable with frequent use. With practice, we can learn any behavior or change any habit that we consider undesirable or necessary” (Tracy, 2007). A person who practices Mind Management has the ability to deal with the challenges posed by fast-paced changes. Such a person can make the best decision in every single situation through employing the special principles of Mind Management and controlling the mind.

- What is Mind Management? (A novel approach)

Before going any further into the concept of Mind Management, this section will start with the subject of the Mind and the question “What is the function of the mind?” As Joseph Murphy comments, “An excellent way to get acquainted with the function of the mind is to look upon your own mind as a garden. You are a gardener, and you are planting seeds (thoughts) in your subconscious mind all day long, based on your habitual thinking. As you sow in your subconscious mind, so shall you reap in your body and environment. Your subconscious mind may be likened to the soil, which will grow all kinds of seeds, good or bad. Every thought is, therefore, a cause, and every condition is an effect. For this reason, it is essential that you take charge of your thoughts and manage them so as to bring forth only desirable conditions” (Murphy, 2007).

The human mind can be divided into the conscious and subconscious mind. Based on this and considering the functional importance of the subconscious mind and its vast responsibilities, Mind Management in fact deals more with managing and controlling the subconscious part. The rationale behind this definition is associated with the way Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, defines the mind. He states, “The mind is like an iceberg, it floats with one-seventh of its bulk above water.” Freud believed that the subconscious mind is where important psychic incidents occur. In fact, since the majority of behavior and actions are under the control of the subconscious mind, through its correct management, the vast part of the mind can be controlled. Therefore, it is necessary to become familiar with the function of the subconscious mind.
and how to manage it. Learning Mind Management can accomplish this.

In the same way, Luske explained, “Once the subconscious mind knows what you want or where you must go, it will get you there! In other words, once you have managed or programmed your mind, everything will start to happen since the subconscious mind will support you. Your behavior, way of speech, belief system—everything is geared for automatic responses. You will walk toward your goals without thinking which particular step comes next” (Luske, 1993). This approach argues that when a human being, via the mastering of Mind Management, is able to control the subconscious mind, there can be control over actions, emotions, behavior, and the body. Therefore, Mind Management is the tool which correctly trains and organizes the subconscious mind to send automatic messages and respond.

Observations about Mind Management, however, might not be readily understandable to the average person since a primary knowledge about the function of the mind is required. Consequently, the present paper aims to provide a new definition of Mind Management which does not call for any special knowledge about the differences between the conscious and subconscious mind. This novel approach is based on a new concept conceived by the authors: the Mental Territory.” This concept utilizes the principles of Cognitive Psychology and because of its simplicity, provides a better understanding of Mind Management.

The present paper proposes that the human mind has a Mental Territory (Fig.4), ranging from a negative infinity to a positive infinity. These two areas play a significant role in the function of the mind and characterize the degree of importance attributed to everything put into them—thoughts, beliefs, events, experiences, and memories. The mind maximizes what it allocates to the positive infinity and minimizes that which is sent to the negative infinity. The main point is that the mind devotes most of its attention, focus, and energy to what is in the positive infinity. That is why the contents of the positive infinity have the potential to turn into one's main concern or philosophy of life. On the other hand, that which is placed into the negative infinity is mostly set aside by the mind and is seldom referred to.

Thus, considering the importance of the events and thoughts located in the positive infinity, one should be extremely careful about the nature of these thoughts. If the positive infinity is filled with destructive thoughts, these will receive the greatest focus from the mind. Eventually, peace of mind will be disturbed and distortion of reality will set in.

Concerning the function of negative thoughts, it should be noted that they first find their way into the positive infinity. Negative messages then gradually take total control of the nervous system, which acts upon these orders and exposes the individual to mental and physical trauma. Violent acts against oneself or society are the results of the presence of such negative or destructive thoughts in the positive infinity. Such negative behavior will finally detach a person from reality. The following examples explore this issue more in-depth.

1. Consider a young man who commits suicide because he fails to win over his beloved. The question is whether the relationship with the young woman is so critical that losing it would warrant taking one's life or if suicide is the result of a distorted and magnified image of a special relationship created in the mind. Unfortunately, the decision to commit suicide does not solve any of the young man’s problems and indicates something must be wrong with his perception. In fact, trouble begins when this person puts his relationship in the positive infinity and so views life from this perceptive. Therefore, he gives too much weight to this relationship and overemphasizes its importance. As a result, the young man's behavior stems from his misperception of reality and not reality per se—an event which falls in the field of Cognitive Psychology. In fact, without practicing Mind Management, he can never recognize the true nature of reality, in this case the possibility of living without his beloved. He can only understand his misperception of reality that is the futility of life without her.

If this young man succeeds in finding a way to control his mind and reducing the importance of this issue, he will be able to eventually make a rational decision, a decision arrived at with the help of Mind Management.

Due to Cognitive Psychology principles, people respond to the world with their mental images. These are the ways by which the surrounding environment is interpreted and understood. According to psychologist and cognitive scientist Steven Pinker (1999), “Our experiences of the world are represented in our minds as mental images. These mental images can then be associated and compared with others and used to synthesize completely new images. In this way, mental images allow us to form the theories of how the world works by formulating likely sequences of mental images without having to directly experience the outcome” (Pinker, 1999). In such process, reality is
not what enables or disables, rather, it is the perception or misperception of reality which shapes behavior. Since perceptions are the reflections of mental images, the role of Mind Management is to help the individual make decisions based on the realities of the surrounding world, not on an exaggerated misperception of events.

Consequently, issues such as the perception of events and the assignment of them as good or bad, right or wrong, useful or useless are the duties of an organized mind. Such a mind is responsible for analyzing incoming data; no thought enters without being considered. What the organized mind views as valuable is allocated to the positive infinity and what is considered as useless is allocated to the negative infinity. Thus, negative stimuli and messages, which are not selected as positive infinity thoughts, cannot have the slightest effect on an individual’s mental state. T. Harv Eker states, “The mind is a powerful tool, but it is also the greatest soap-opera scriptwriter in history! It creates powerful stories based on dramas or disasters that have never happened and likely never will. As Mark Twain said, “I’ve had thousands of problems in my life, most of which never actually happened” (Eker, 2009). As a result, if the young man in the first example, had received proper training about how to correctly control and manage his mind, the importance of his romantic interest would have been greatly reduced. In fact, he might have actually felt embarrassed when recollecting his lovesick behavior; the mind would have minimized the issue and put it in the negative infinity.

II. For the second example, a true story is provided. A friend of the authors was invited to her in-laws’ home. While she was intently helping herself to dinner, her mother-in-law sarcastically commented, “Hey, you eat like a horse!” This friend reported that, at that moment, she seriously felt like killing her mother-in-law. However, here is the question: can such a taunting comment turn a person into a murderer? Of course. The same misperception occurs here as it does with the young man in the first example. In this case, negative messages, in the form of destructive thoughts, are located in the most critical part of the mind, its positive infinity, and so give immense importance to a subject.

It should be mentioned that the mind has the habit of frequently referring to its memories without needing to. Therefore, day and night, it constantly faces the challenge of unwanted shifts between the present and the past. This is because most people live their lives in the world of time, in memories of the past or anticipation of the future. Enchained in these thoughts, a person experiences the result of this thinking in the form of negative moods. This is why, for more than one month, the daughter-in-law in this example could not stop thinking about that night.

Consequently, the continuous shifts of the mind from one thought to another will reduce the ability to think effectively and increase negative thinking. In fact, there is a restless monkey in an individual’s mind, what Buddhists call ‘the Monkey Mind,’ and if it is not effectively managed, the Monkey Mind will gamble away time and stir up mental chaos. If one has the ability to efficiently control and manage the Monkey Mind, then one has created a cage for it. This monkey, which is a symbol of our nervous system, can be controlled by the knowledge of Mind Management and the ability to do so forms its pinnacle.

III. The third example deals with a suicide bomber or a religious extremist who performs a terrorist act for so-called religious beliefs, thus causing panic, terror and destruction. The tragedy of September 11th, 2001, is a prime example of how destructive and negative thoughts can infiltrate the positive infinity of a terrorist’s mind. What should be noted here is that if one does not consciously select the thoughts that are placed in the positive infinity, this will be done by others through unethical manipulative methods—something which is called Mind Control or Brainwashing.

Osho states, “If someone is throwing garbage into your house you will fight with that person, but if someone is throwing garbage into your mind you will not fight with him! You are not aware that your mind can also be filled with garbage. If your mind is like a guesthouse, if it is not well protected, then it will be difficult for you to become free of impure thoughts. You should consciously watch over your mind, constantly watching what is happening inside you and rejecting whatever is useless” (Osho & Rajneesh, 2010). As you see, Osho places much importance on managing the mind and preserving its purity.

After these three specific examples, controlling the Mental Territory can be discussed on a large scale, i.e. on society’s level. Now, imagine that, instead of one person, a society has implanted useless thoughts in the positive infinity of its mind. This is what has happened in some societies, and, maybe, this is the major cause of their troubles. For example, some animals have been given exceptional importance by some cultures. This can go to the extreme when the rights of animals are more respected than those of humans. Here the question can be posed: Should humans, who sit at the top of the evolutionary ladder, fall so low so as to be considered less than animals? As in the previous examples, distortion of reality occurs when the human mind (society) injects distorted values in the positive infinity.
IV. The last and fourth example deals with the successful control of the Mental Territory. Before going further, it is worth mentioning that one of the practical results of applying Mind Management is Positive Thinking. Positive thinking is an optimistic way of perceiving surrounding events. This means, instead of cherishing negative aspects, one concentrates on positive ones and therefore enjoys a healthy outlook and behavior.

According to Anthony Robbins, “…there is a famous story told about Tom Watson, the founder of IBM. One of his subordinates had made a horrendous mistake that had cost the company ten million dollars. He was called into Watson’s office and said, ‘I suppose you want my resignation.’ Watson looked at him and said, ‘Are you kidding? We just spent ten million dollars educating you’” (Robbins, 1987).

It should be noted that, by properly applying Mind Management, Tom Watson was able to put 'the ten million dollar loss' in the negative infinity of his mind while holding on to positive assumptions about human nature—in this case, human resources—in the positive infinity of his mind. In fact, his attitude is based on Brian Tracy’s statement (2007): “Difficulties come not to obstruct, but to instruct.” Positive thinkers are better able to control their thoughts and so make fewer mistakes. If asked to talk about any subject, they consider the positive aspects as well as recognizing the negative ones. In other words, they view the glass as half-full.

Based on all that has been discussed, the best suggestion for controlling the Mental Territory and managing the mind is to monitor and organize the information that enters the mind. In other words, one needs to be aware of what is happening in the Mental Territory.

This is best done by learning how to manage and control the mind and stopping the influence of destructive thoughts. Such a process begins by dividing incoming messages and placing them into the positive or negative infinity of the mind. This means one should observe thoughts, analyze the nature of the incoming data, and ask the vital ‘Mind Management Question’ (hereafter MMQ): “Is this really necessary for my survival and success?” In this context, the real significance of matters is determined by logic and realism and not by the misperception of reality. This is a special skill which is acquired when mastering Mind Management.

The authors provide, in four steps, a detailed analysis of how Mind Management works.
- Receive messages (positive or negative) from the surrounding environment
- Observe and analyze the nature of incoming data with MMQ (based on logic and reality, not the misperception of events: Cognitive Psychology)
- Confirm vital data necessary for survival and success and send these into the positive infinity of the mind as guidelines to be performed
- Filter the negative or useless messages or allocate them into the negative infinity of the mind

Figure 5.

By diligently applying these steps and managing the Mental Territory, one masters Mind Management. Such a person is equipped with a Mental Filter which carefully judges every thought from a realistic view, then purifies it and finally confirms it as a positive infinity thought. In this way, the mind acquires the ability to distinguish negative or disempowering thoughts from the positive or empowering thoughts. As long as one is cognizant of what transpires in the Mental Territory, there is self-awareness. That means one is aware of the nature of the thoughts and beliefs that have already been placed into the positive or negative infinity of the mind. This is a practical ability for managing the mind and to take advantage of its extraordinary power.

An interesting point is that we often implement the “Mental Territory Theory” while working with our personal computers. At times, perhaps we have all encountered computers that hang or slow down. From a technical point of view, this can originate from CPU overuse. This problem usually occurs when multiple programs are simultaneously run and the CPU is unable to process all of them. Actually, many of these programs are not usually needed at the time and are only running because they are in the Windows startup and run in the background; in effect, they waste processing capacity. So, all that is needed is to run the “Windows Task Manager” and “End Process” unwanted programs (Fig.6).

As described, unwanted factors which have already been placed into the CPU (the most critical
part of the computer) are “end processed.” In fact, this is similar to how the Mental Territory functions. Unwanted thoughts are consciously moved from the positive infinity (the most critical part of the mind) into the negative infinity. As you see, the mind works like a CPU. The question is how can one has the ability to manage a CPU but is unable to do the same for his/her mind?

Figure 6.

To answer this question, get a piece of paper and draw the Mental Territory diagram (Fig.7). Write down the thoughts that mostly occupy your mind’s positive or negative infinity. Do these thoughts really deserve the place they occupy or should they be moved to either the positive or negative infinity?

Figure 7.

By performing this practice, you can also realize how much energy is consumed by all these thoughts. Perhaps it is about time that you acquire a self-awareness of the Mental Territory and this is easily possible by applying the principles of Mind Management.

Overall, this paper argues that Mind Management is the ability to control the Mental Territory by placing various thoughts and incoming messages into the positive or negative infinity of the mind based on their real usefulness for the individual. Such a practice is a fully intentional act which relies heavily on the individual’s training and habits.

- What is needed before achieving Mind Management?

So far, we have come to understand that due to the side effects of technology, peace of mind has been lost. This indicates the necessity of acquiring and mastering Mind Management. However, can an individual start the Mind Management process at any given moment or is there a series of prerequisites to be met? To answer this question, we need to know a little more about the functions of the brain. The brain has two seemingly identical hemispheres. However, extensive examination has identified that these hemispheres have different specific functions and control various types of activities. Based on the theory of ‘left-brain or right-brain dominance,’ the left hemisphere of the brain is designed for analytical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, and other logical tasks. These require cognitive functioning in order to deal with problems, something which requires high brain activity and energy. Conversely, the right hemisphere of the brain is mainly designed for relaxation, tranquility, happiness, and enjoyment, all of which provides the required energy for the left hemisphere. The energy generated by the right hemisphere is transmitted to the left hemisphere by the means of a flat group of nerve fibers called ‘the Corpus Callosum’ which connects the two cerebral hemispheres and enables communication between the two.

Considering the analytic nature of the Mind Management function, a question arises: “Which hemisphere of the brain is responsible for carrying out this process?” The answer is the left hemisphere. However, according to Baras, there is a problem:
“In today’s fast-moving world, there is way too much information and our brain, might reach a point of pressure very often. This is when the brain pushes the "red alert" button and says, 'Enough! No more analyzing, and no more thinking!' If we ignore this signal, the sound of the red alert increases until we just shutdown from exhaustion. The risk of not paying attention to the warning signs are that sometimes, we overload the left brain. The best way to change the balance and turn off the warning signs is to use the right brain more and create positive energy. Fun things we enjoy and love doing can do this straight away” (Byrne, 2006).

In summary, the left hemisphere requires sufficient energy for facilitating Mind Management, an analytical activity of the brain. What should be noted here is the fact that, due to the volume of analytical activities by the left hemisphere, its spent energy needs to be replenished. Therefore, the right hemisphere absorbs this energy from the environment by various methods and transfers it to the left hemisphere through the Corpus Callosum. This energy is used to provide a balance between the two hemispheres, and safeguards the individual’s mental health through proper brain functioning.

3. Conclusion

It goes without saying that the power of the mind is the ruling force in today’s world. Those who effectively wield this power are the ones who achieve the greatest success. Dr. John Hagelin states, “We are using at most 5% of the potential of the human mind. 100% human potential is the result of proper education. Imagine a world where people are using their full mental potential” (Byrne, 2006). This observation resounds the need for Mind Management. In fact, since the main source of any thought is the mind, Mind Management plays a critical role in life as a way of controlling and organizing the mind.

Based on this paper’s discussion, being familiar with the function of the mind and the Mental Territory is a fundamental and practical ability that is mastered by those applying Mind Management. Mind Management is the technique of managing the Mental Territory, controlling it and finally taking advantage of the mind’s remarkable abilities in order to control the surrounding world.

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.”

William James (1842-1910)

References