



The RESET Program by Alex Howard ©

Module 4 – Transcript

Copyright Notice: Please do not share these transcripts with anyone. Apart from this being a breach of copyright, which would result in losing your own access to the RESET program, this material is not designed to be used outside of the context and framework of the RESET Program. Thank you.

[00h:00m:02s]

Welcome to Module Four of the RESET program. This is an important module. I know we've been spending quite a bit of time and energy through module three, exploring the different patterns and building self-awareness.

Remember, if you can see it, you don't have to be it. That awareness is enormously powerful on its own, but it's often not enough to really change and rewire the patterns that we have.

And I know sometimes through the process of going through module three, people can almost feel a bit more frustrated. It's like, 'now I see all this stuff that's happening, but I can't stop it'. That's what we're coming into in this module, the STOP process I'm going to be teaching you is one of the most, in some ways simple, but not always easy, but one of the most powerful techniques I know for creating lasting change.

Just to give you a bit more of an overview. We've covered so far in Module one, The Mindset of Change. If you haven't already, please do watch that module.

It's an important foundation, including some of the ideas we're going to come into in this module. Also, some of the work in there around Beliefs is really important, and particularly the letter that you wrote to yourself.

And if at this point, you're struggling a bit with your motivation with the program, revisit the letter you wrote in Module One. We then, in Module Two, explored The Art of Mindfulness. And hopefully you've been practicing and cultivating a daily meditation practice since then.

And then in the last module in Self-Awareness boot camp, we really went into understanding your nervous system, the different ratings, and you put together your rating scale.

We then have been looking at the different core patterns, the five personality patterns of the helper, the achiever, the perfectionist, the anxiety and the controller pattern. Hopefully you've been doing your thought diary since then, which will have been helping build your awareness.



[00:02:06]

So what we need at this point in RESET, is a way of breaking the patterns we've become aware of.

It's one thing to see these different personality patterns and perhaps to be acutely aware, let's say, that there is an anxiety pattern that's going on, that you can see that you're constantly trying to think your way to a feeling of safety. And now you're seeing it with a whole new spotlight, but the pattern is still happening.

How do you rewire your thinking patterns? How do you train your mind? And fundamentally, how do you train your nervous system to function differently?

That's what we're coming into. We're going to cover the science of how habits are created. We're going to talk about the STOP process, a powerful tool for breaking habits. We'll talk about five patterns that most people have. These are different sort of ways of thinking which can continue the process of wiring up the nervous system and seeing them and changing them can be enormously helpful.

We're going to talk about how to break a pattern and how to condition a new pattern. Now, I should say at this point that I know that some people coming into the RESET Program have done other programs out there, which teach elements of a STOP Process. And I will speak to more of this in the separate Q&As where I go through some of these things in a bit more detail.

But something important I want to say at this point, I do not come from the perspective that you just need to rewire your mind and your thinking.

We have a very different orientation to some of those programs in the RESET program. And two particular differences:

One - we are not using this as a way of trying to force your mind and your nervous system to be different. We're not trying to go to war with yourself.

We want to be listening to your emotions and listening to your body. We are not trying to stop your feelings and emotions. If anything quite the opposite. And I'll come to this more later in this module.

The second thing is we're moving from this constant thinking and activity in the mind, to actually coming more into your body.

This embodied element is enormously important as part of the focus of the RESET Program.

We're not just trying to change and replace thoughts. We're trying to shift our attention from being so in the mind to being much more in your body.



[00:04:38]

So if you had challenges or difficulties with other programs teaching elements of this. I think that's probably a lot of the reasons why, we'll come to it more later in this module, but also, I'll talk to some of that more separately in the supplementary videos as well.

If you haven't covered any of these things before, you can just ignore the last bit that I just talked about.

So I talked a bit about this in the three-part video series at the start. And I just want to touch on it again.

This idea of neural plasticity: neurons that fire together, wire together.

When we have certain habits and patterns of thinking, we train our mind to function in a certain way.

We're not just training our mind. We're also training our nervous system. We're training our body. We are conditioning certain responses in ourselves.

If we do something consistently as a habit long enough - after a while, it just starts to feel like that's part of who we are.

So if we're someone that's been a maladaptive stress response for a long time, we start to feel, "well, I am just someone that has that stress response. That's who I am". Maybe that's not the case. Maybe it's something that you've trained, unintentionally, trained yourself to be a certain way.

But if you think about it every time, if you noticed you were going from path A to path B and you condition that just like this neuroplasticity, you've conditioned two neurons to be wired together.

But after a while, each time you got to A rather than going to B, you decided to go from A to C. So you rather than doing this. You did this. And you conditioned that as a new pattern, and every time you noticed you were about to go down the old path, you consciously caught it, you stopped it, and you went down a different path.

After a while, you would train yourself to be different. It's a bit like training a dog not to jump on the sofa. If you do it from time to time, the dog sort of learns from time 'I am going to get told to get off the sofa'. But if every time that dog goes on the sofa, it gets pushed off. After a while it starts to look at you, look at the sofa, look at you, look at the sofa and then go into its basket.

There's a training process. We learn through habit and through repetition, the patterns of thinking that we have, if we've fired neurons together enough times, we've wired them together. You can rewire how your mind and how your nervous system works. Question is how - and that's what we're coming to with this module.



[00:07:10]

When it comes to conditioning and new habits, there's a few things that are important. Habits are conditioned through repetition. The more times you do something, the more you learn something. Another example of this will be that let's say you've lived in the same house for 10 years and you've had the same route, let's say, to go into work each day. And then one day you move and let's say that the journey between the two houses starts the same.

Maybe there's a sort of motorway involved. Motorways are good places to be a bit more unconscious. We tend to sort of drift a bit more in our thinking, because there's less immediacy that we have to sort of deal with.

And let's say that suddenly one day it's been a long day at work and you're driving home and you suddenly realise that you missed the junction for the new house, because you conditioned, you trained yourself to go down a certain path. Of course over time, you get so used to the new path that that becomes the new habit. Often the repetition of our habits is unconscious. It's not something that we necessarily are aware that we're doing. We just do it enough times, that we train our unconscious to have <xxx> of something. I'm going to come back to that in a moment.

To change, we need to become conscious of what is happening unconsciously. The more we can make our unconscious conscious, the more we can do something about it.

And I think, you know, through some of the popular culture presentations of things like hypnosis, people have this idea that the unconscious is some sort of weird and sort of miraculous thing, that someone who has superpowers can access and make us dance like a chicken. If anyone saw the Paul McKenna show back in the 90s.

So, that isn't really how the unconscious works. Yes, there are things which are deeper, unconscious habits and patterns that are, you know, some of the ways that our body runs from our heart beating to cell regeneration - there's very deep, unconscious bodily programs that happen.

But much of what's in our unconscious is just things we are not currently consciously aware of. And when we put conscious attention on these things. There is this part of the process of what we were doing in the last module of self-awareness. By looking at things through certain lenses, you can suddenly start to see things that were already there.

You didn't have the lens through which to be able to see them. And I think this is important in terms of how we train conscious and unconscious competence of a habit.

So the way that this works is often when we're learning something new, we start off with unconscious incompetence. We don't know what we don't know.



[00:09:48]

And so we don't know that we haven't got a capacity or a skill, whatever it may be. And let's take learning to drive. I remember when I first had driving lessons and it just seemed like it was a pretty simple thing. Like you'd see people drive one hand, it was sort of turning a wheel.

And particularly if you're driving a manual or a stick shift car, it's actually quite difficult the first times you do it. I think most people the first time they try and drive a car with gears, is the first thing they do is they miss the bite point and they stall the car. It's not like driving video games, if you've been doing that for years as a teenager. So you discover, you go from unconscious incompetence to conscious incompetence.

You realise you don't know how to do something. Then you go through the process of conscious competence. You have to practice something enough times and it takes quite a lot of attention and awareness to be able to do that. So that's why you have driving lessons and you have to sort of do 10 o'clock and 12 o'clock and you have to check your mirror every seven seconds and all the various things that you do when you learn to drive and it takes effort. It takes focus. It takes discipline to train the habit.

But you do that enough times and your unconscious learn how to do that thing. So then you go from conscious competence to unconscious competence.

You can now do this thing without having to use lots of conscious thinking and conscious mind. You've just conditioned and trained a habit to be able to do something. So then you can drive a car with one hand whilst eating a sandwich whilst using a phone handsfree and doing Pythagoras's theorem in your mind. Probably not a good idea, but you get the point.

The same is true when it comes to changing habits. You don't know what you don't know, but then you become more aware of the habit.

You're then able to do something to condition and change and train a new habit, a new way of being.

And that's what we're learning to do through the STOP process. Before we come into the STOP process, I want to give you a bit of a context and the history about where this comes from.

So there have been versions of saying STOP to thoughts or habits, or feelings or emotions, for many years in different forms of psychotherapy and the early versions of coaching that were out there.

The first version I learned was about 20 years ago when I was training in NLP, hypnotherapy, life coaching, EFT, and at the time I was in the later stages of my recovery from M.E. / Chronic Fatigue. And the way that I originally learnt a version of a STOP process was as a way of stopping thinking about and reacting to thoughts, to emotions, to symptoms.



[00:12:40]

And at the point that I was at that point, one of my challenges was I'd been ill for so many years that I was so used to checking my body, thinking about symptoms. Would I have the energy to do something? Would I feel better? Would I feel worse? Would I crash? How would I feel afterwards?

That that constant checking was creating a maladaptive stress response. So learning to stop those patterns actually helped a calming of the system, which then helped create more, ultimately, helped create more energy.

If you think back to cell danger response, ultimately my system going from danger signalling to actually being more efficient and more productive in making energy. Pass by a few years and I wrote a book about my experience with ME / Chronic Fatigue.

The book wasn't an international bestseller, but it sold some copies. And people sort of interpreted and in hindsight, I went back and corrected this in later editions, but people sort of interpreted that learning to shift and say stop to certain thought patterns was the thing that was the kind of a miracle cure from ME / Chronic Fatigue.

I'd made massive steps forward before that with many other pieces of the jigsaw, some of which, of course, are part of the RESET Program. And I sort of felt uncomfortable with this at the time, because what I realized was, for me...

Part of it - yes, learning to stop certain thought patterns had been really useful - but part of it was also learning to actually listen to my body, listen to my emotions, particularly as the years went by.

And I had some other challenges around trauma and so on. Listening to my emotions and listening to my body, what I started to realize is having a blanket tool that we use for everything is not helpful. But when it comes to stopping the mind and the patterns of thinking that we have, these techniques and processes that I'm going to talk more about in a moment, can be very, very powerful. But it's not a blanket tool. And as we're going to come to in the subsequent modules in RESET - we're going to learn to listen to your emotions.

We're going to learn to listen to your body and actually use that as a body of wisdom.

But when it comes to breaking patterns of thinking, we can talk about things we can understand things, we can use maps, we can use labels. We can go into long explorations of the history around things...

But ultimately, when we have a pattern of thinking that's not helpful, we need to stop it and we need to shift our focus elsewhere. Now, shifting our focus, one way to do it is to replace it with a positive thought. And that's, again, the way that I was originally taught. That you stop an unhelpful thought and then you think a positive thought. The problem that I found for myself and for many, many people I've worked with, was they ended up just going round and round in their mind, constantly trying to fight their thinking.



[00:15:30]

This was a big discovery for me.

That actually shifting state; going from being in the mind to being more in the body - this more embodied approach - has a much more lasting effect. So rather than constantly having to fight your thoughts, what actually happens is you rewire certain ways of thinking. But by doing that in this way, you train your system to become calmer.

And this can sometimes appear truly miraculous for people. That it's like suddenly their system re-learns how it is to be in a calm, relaxed, healing state.

It can sound very simple and in a minute, when we come into the process, part of you is going to think 'Alex it can't possibly be this simple. I've got all of these terrifying symptoms and all of these years of things that are going on. And you're going to tell me that I just need to learn to say stop to those things and shift my attention? Alex, you're crazy'.

What I would say is, if you feel that way, please be a scientist, test your hypothesis: the belief that it is possible to rewire and change how your nervous system responds.

If that's the tabletop, we need to go and get some legs. We need to get some evidence that demonstrates to you that ultimately it is possible, it is possible to train and retrain the wiring of your system.

So let's now come to the actual steps of the process.

First thing in the STOP process is we need to recognize the pattern. It's part of the reason why we spent the time we did last week on self-awareness. I'm also going to point to a little bit later in this module, some very simple patterns of thinking that we can have that can be helpful to see.

We then want to be able to stop. And I'm going to come to this a little bit. How do you actually say stop, the actual gesture, the word, the way we do that is really important.

We then make a choice. Do I want to keep doing this? Do I want to continue down this path of thinking?

And I think one of the ways to see that as we can continue down the path of, let's say the pattern is pushing our body too hard and ignoring how our bodies communicate to us. What's the price of doing that? We're going to continue to crash, to feel terrible, to not recover. Do I want to do that?



[00:17:53]

Or I want to choose a new path, a path of listening, of connecting, of being in tune with my body?

We then shift attention. We shift our attention into the body. This is an important piece. We're not just wanting to go around and around in the mind. We're recognizing we've stopped. We don't want to go down that path. And we bring our attention into our arms, our legs, our breathing. This is where some of the meditation work we've been doing is really helpful.

We then say to ourselves inside of our mind, 'very good well done'. This positive reinforcement just helps reinforce the shift in the pattern.

Now, I did say this is simple, not easy. Do not be fooled by the simplicity of this process. If you think about it, if you want to break a habit and it's a 15-minute elaborate process, a lot of steps you have to go through each time: a. You're not going to do it. And B, it's not going to work because your thinking patterns run on simple programs that we get habituated towards doing.

So we need to have something quick and something that is simple to actually be able to change the patterns that are happening.

It's simple. It is not often easy. This is a process that takes practice. It takes time. It takes a level of skill. And we're going to come into in the supplementary videos and support for this module, a whole bunch of the questions and pieces that come out of this. We're also going to build on this module five. We're going to use a different version of the STOP process.

I call it the presence process, but it's a version of the STOP process. And we're going to come into some other pieces to help deepen the experience as well.

We need to, at this point, set up your stop button. This is your way of saying to yourself, stop. Now, in an ideal world, this would just be saying to yourself inside your mind the word 'stop'. And you will do that in certain situations.

Obviously, if you're around other people and you start walking around and making gestures and talking out loud, they probably think you're going crazy. And that has a whole other set of problems that go with it.

But communication to ourselves and communication to other people is only seven percent of the words we actually say. It's 38 percent voice tonality and 55 percent body posture. It's why if I say to you, 'yeah, it's very interesting. Yeah, it's really interesting', you don't feel particularly persuaded by my level of interest. If I say to you, 'oh, my God, I've got to tell you the story. It was the most boring, the most uninteresting thing I've ever experienced'.



[00:20:32]

Probably you're a bit more curious. The words are less important than the tonality and the body posture.

So if we say to ourselves, 'STOP!', it's not the same as saying in a very calm but firm way, 'stop'.

The way you say stop is a lot more important than the actual words. In fact, some of you are going to find that the word stop doesn't really work for you. You're going to find that either it feels like a judgement, or it just doesn't really - there's some sort of history perhaps around the word. So you might use the word 'pause'.

You might say the words 'breath', you might say the word 'breathe'. You might say the words 'be gentle'. So it might be in different ways. Generally 'stop' is the most consistently helpful, but absolutely feel free to substitute with something that feels more comfortable. But we need to have our tonality and ideally, we need to use our body for this to be as effective as it can possibly be.

So the qualities of an effective STOP button are being firm and being clear, being gentle and kind.

This is not - we want to be non-judgmental - this is not about saying 'STOP! You're the most stupid, terrible idiot in the world'.

It's about helping yourself pause. Just in the way that, you know, you have a child that perhaps is doing some homework and they're just going in the wrong direction. You might just go, 'hang on, stop, just stop for a second'.

It's not STOP! The key to this, is it's not a judgement. It's not an attack.

And one of the things that can happen - and I'll speak to this in the supplementary videos - that one of these that can happen is that over time, the stop sort of gets hijacked by the inner critic and it turns into a form of judgement. We have to reign it back if that's happening.

Ultimately, the stop is coming from a place which is empowering and supportive.

If your stop button takes on the quality of shaming yourself or telling yourself off, then you need to change it.

This is coming from a place of love and care and kindness, and it's possible to tell someone to stop that's going down a certain path in a way that is absolutely neutral of judgement.



[00:22:46]

In fact, it's coming from a place of genuine care and concern and consideration for that person.

So what I'd like to do now is I'd like us to set up your STOP button.

We'll come to the other steps of the process in a moment. Here are some examples of STOP buttons that for many people can be helpful.

You do the one-handed version - so it can simply be 'stop'. There's something about these gestures that seem to help in terms of the body posture side. You could try a two-handed version going 'stop'.

You could try a version where you cross the hands over like this. So you go 'stop'. Another version is imagining watching a TV and having a remote control and going 'stop'.

We can try some different words as well. So you might go 'pause', or you might go 'breathe'. What I'd like to do is let's try some of these different examples together, and I know you're going to feel probably a bit silly, but you're kind of watching this video and suddenly you're sort of talking out loud and making postures. But remember your commitment to doing this program.

This is self-help, not shelf-help. It's awesome that you've got the point. You're watching Module four, but if you're not doing the exercise, you're not really doing it.

So please do follow along with me at this point. So let's try this one first. We're going to go 'stop'. So on the count of three together, we'll do it 'one, two, three... Stop'. And just notice how that feels. Let's do the two-handed version together. So on three, one, two, three, stop.

Notice how that feels. Let's then do the crossing hand version. So on three, one to three, stop.

And then let's try the remote-control version. So going like that, one, two, three, stop. Notice how that feels.

Let's then try the word 'pause', so we'll do a cross handed version of the word pause. So one, two, three, pause. And then let's just try this version where we're going to go 'breathe'. So on three, one, two, three, breathe. And then you might take a deep breath in and out. Notice which of those felt the most natural for you, felt the most comfortable for you and felt the most effective for you?

You can absolutely take variations. There might be something else that you come up with. What's important is it's content-free, so that we're not getting into a debate with the judgement or the criticism. So if there's a voice in your mind, let's say your inner critic saying, 'you're the most useless person in the whole world', you're not responding by going, STOP! I'm absolutely not the most useless person that just continues the sort of psychodrama of it.



[00:25:46]

So we want to have a very clean stop or pause or breathe or something else that feels like it kind of resonates and feels right for you.

So let's park that piece for a minute. We're going to come back to that in a moment.

Let's then talk about this third step, which is: so we've got recognize the pattern, we've got stop. Let's talk about this power of choice.

In the moment we have the pattern. As I mentioned briefly earlier, we have two choices.

We can continue down the path of the pattern. We can allow that pattern to continue or we can stop the pattern and we can shift our attention.

Shifting our attention means: bringing our attention out of the continuation of that thinking and that pattern and into our body. Connecting to our arms, our legs, our breath, our breathing - we'll come back to that more in a moment.

And remember those patterns are on one level, they are just the habit. So as much as it may feel so true and that that's how the world is and you need to go down that path, it's just a conditioned habit.

You've got used to thinking about the world in that way. We need to condition a new response. We need to train your system to come into your body and to come out of that maladaptive stress response. What we're really doing is we're conditioning ourselves to go from freeze or fight or flight into a safe and social. And it's not a safe and social that's dependent upon someone else or the environment out there. We're creating that place of safe and social inside of us.

And we'll come to that more in Module five as well.

Reinforcing the positive. As we're working to break the old pattern.

We also want to cultivate a new positive way of relating to ourselves. So at the end of each cycle, we say to ourselves, 'well done' or 'very good', well done or great job. You can choose, you know, the phrase or the words that feel right for you.

And we want to try and say that, just like we're saying the stop with a certain tone and focus. We want to say that with a level of kindness and care that we would say to someone else - that someone that we love and we care about.

So it's not sort of a token 'well done'. It's like, 'well done, great job!'



[00:28:05]

So we're - and you may say that out loud - you may say it inside of your mind with the STOP - but we want to be saying out loud in situations that are appropriate to do so, while you're not around other people.

The 'well done', some people say, inside their minds, because it tends to be a bit more internally focused at this point. So it can feel more appropriate to say inside of their minds. But just noticing what it feels like. Some people report at this point, it's one of the first time in their lives they remember actually talking to themselves in a kind way.

So we're also conditioning and training this new way of being in relationship to ourselves. So let's go through the steps again. So the first thing is recognize the pattern. That's part of what we're working on in the last module. I'm going to come in a minute to some more examples of some patterns you can work on. So you recognize the pattern.

We actually do the stop, and as long as you're not around other people, you're going to go either stop or stop or breathe or whatever... Whatever feels like the one that resonates most for you.

Then we're going to choose. Do I want to keep on doing this? Do I want to go down that path?

And it's like sometimes really seeing, what are the consequences of going down that path? If I push myself, I'm going to crash. I'm going to beat myself up. I'm going to feel crap for a few days in the chronic fatigue example.

If we're talking an anxiety example, if I keep worrying about things in that way, I'm just going to get more anxious and more worried.

For a sleep example. And it's through the day and we're building up to going to bed and we keep thinking about not sleeping that night, like we're imagining not sleeping and conditioning and training that - you're training your mind to feel a certain way.

So this choice is important, because we're choosing to not continue to give energy to that.

Neurons that fire together, wire together.

We want to stop wiring those neurons together and we're shifting our attention and coming into our body.

So as we come into our body, that becomes the new grounding. That becomes a new home. So we're feeling our feet. We're feeling our arms, we're feeling our legs. We'll come into a deeper version of this with the Presence Process in the next module. But for now, just a little bit like you were doing in the meditation practice, you just coming into being more here in this moment.



[00:30:18]

And then we have the positive reinforcement where you're saying to yourself, very good, well done.

So I just want to come to some other examples of patterns to start working with, particularly because the patterns we talked about in the last module sometimes take a bit more practice to be able to see. And this is a very helpful little checklist that you can come to.

These are sort of like mental programs or ways of thinking which just sort of condition our mind to be a certain way. And they're often quite easy to spot.

They're often quite easy to shift when we see them.

First one is mental tennis. This is when we go back and forth in our mind, trying to make a decision about what to do. But the more we go back and forth, the more overwhelmed we start to feel. It's a bit like watching tennis, particularly women's tennis stuff, which is more interesting to watch because they don't end it on the serve so quickly. And it's like you're going back and forth and it's like you almost get entertained by it, sort of like by watching tennis.

But actually you don't get any clearer and you often feel more and more un-resourceful to be able to even make a decision. And actually, if things slow down and we were more connected to ourselves, we weren't so caught in all the anxieties we'd often get to see things more clearly. So that's mental tennis.

The second is Snowball thinking. This is when we start with a small thought of worry or concern, and it's like a snowball rolling down a mountain. It gathers more and more snow as it rolls. This is what CBT might call Catastrophizing.

We're making the problem much bigger than it actually is. So an example might be that, let's say we are going to see a family. We've been invited to go and see family over the weekend. And just the thought of this puts us in a sort of trauma response.

Our heart starts to race and we start to feel a bit sort of dizzy and unsafe.

And then as we think about it, we think, 'well, if I don't go, they're going to think they're going to feel rejected. And I will feel like I've failed and like I'm never moving forwards. And if I never move forward with this, I'm not going to be able to do things in my life'. And suddenly our whole life starts to feel out of control.



[00:32:21]

Or an example might be with the achiever pattern let's say, that we're pushing ourselves around the deadline, but we just don't have the either the physical energy, or perhaps just emotionally we're too depleted to do it. And we imagine not getting this project in on time. And it probably doesn't matter as much as we're making it matter in this example.

And we imagine getting the sack and then losing our home and our children not having an education and our whole life falling apart.

We take something small and we inflate it to something much bigger.

The third example is mind-blending. This is when our mind is just running too fast. It's like we're just the whole system is running too quickly and it's like a blender. Anything you put in that blender is going to get turned into soup. So you could put an iPhone in there. You could put cabbage in there, you could put carrots in there. Anything goes in there, is just going to get blended up.

So our mind is running so fast that something really pleasant happens and we turn it into an anxiety because we're just spinning so much.

If we calm things down, we'll find that we have a different perception of how we see things.

The fourth example is the inner critic. I spoke to this briefly a bit earlier. This kind of voice inside us is constantly judging us, criticizing us, telling us we're crap, we're useless, beating up on us.

We're going to get into the inner critic much more in module nine. But it's just helpful at this point to notice if there is a voice of internal criticism or judgement.

That's the inner critic.

The fifth example is labelled here as 'Windows ME', but it could be 'Windows Sleep', it could be 'Windows Anxiety', it could be 'Windows Trauma'. It could be 'Windows Pain'.

This is where we process the world through the perception, the mental program of the issue or the thing that we're working with, and originally, we came up with Windows ME because it was around 2003 - I think it was - and Windows Millennium Edition, the operating system for Windows had come out.

And the thing about Windows Millennium Edition is it couldn't handle too many programs and it seemed to crash a lot of the time.

And it sort of reminded me of some of the chronic fatigue people I was working with at the time, because they would get overwhelmed by this pattern of thinking, because everything would get filtered through. Will I have the energy? How will I feel? Will it make me worse? Why have I got these symptoms?



[00:34:36]

So even very pleasant things like being hearing a friend's getting married and a possible wedding invite, would trigger maladaptive stress response or the questions of, 'will I have the energy? will I crash? Will I be able to go? Will I get the food I need? What if I don't sleep the night before?'

Example, Windows Sleep, we get nearer to going to bed and everything is about will I sleep tonight? Will I be overstimulated? What if I wake up? How will I feel tomorrow?

Windows Pain would be an example of constantly checking and noticing our pain and worrying about how we're going to feel again - if I do that thing will my pain be worse? How is my pain now?

So we start to filter and perceive the world through the lens of the symptoms or the issue we're working with, which then means that our system is constantly being triggered into maladaptive stress response unnecessarily.

So identifying and noticing these patterns is often really helpful. Often also we find we do these patterns as we're trying to do the process. So we do mental tennis around:

Have I done my stop right? Should I do it this way? Should I do it that way? How about that? Or we do Snowball thinking around, what if the STOP process doesn't work for me? What if the RESET program doesn't work for me and nothing else has worked?

And so it's just really paying attention to these patterns of thinking. These are great things to work with stopping.

So I think we've reached the point that we've talked enough about the process. I think let's start to have an experience of the process.

Another good example of actually not just watching passively.

I want you to follow through. I'm going to take you through this process three times before the end of the module. It's really important that you follow through and do the exercise with me.

Obviously, if you're watching this or listening to this whilst driving a car or operating dangerous machinery, pause. Now is not the time to do this.

You need to be able to do this in a place where you can give your attention internally and your attention is not required externally.

So I'm going to guide you through the steps of the process. You already have your stop button, so we're going to use the stop that we set up. We need to look for a pattern to work with.



[00:36:59]

I'm going to suggest that you start with a pattern that comes up about doing the process. This might be a pattern of 'I can't / I won't be able to do it' or 'what if it doesn't work' or 'what if I don't remember the steps' or kind of going back and forth in your mind around which stop you should use, or 'I'm going to feel stupid doing it'.

If there's nothing in that category. Great. Feel free just to pick something around where your nervous system feels right now. If your system feels a bit stimulated or triggered, have a look at any the thoughts around that, or go back to any of the patterns that we talked about in the previous module as well.

But noticing a pattern doesn't have to be the right pattern or the perfect pattern. Anything you can use to practice the process is great at this point. You can do this with your eyes open or closed. You generally find a little bit like with meditation and mindfulness. If you close your eyes, there's less distractions and it's easier to have an internal focus. But if for some reason, closing your eyes doesn't feel right for you, it's fine to have your eyes open.

But if you're happy to close your eyes, close your eyes and just become aware of that pattern running right now, notice the sort of thoughts, the way you experience it. And then on three, we're going to do the stop that you chose from the previous section. So ready? One, two, three, stop. Whichever word you used, you do the gesture and you say out loud.

You can then relax your hands and notice right now you've got a choice. You can continue down the old path of thinking that way and think about how unhelpful that is, how that takes you in a certain direction, or you can choose to go down a new path.

As you choose a new way of being with yourself. I'd like you to shift your attention right now more into your body.

Notice the feeling of your feet on the floor. There's a feeling of your hands in your lap or your hands wherever they are. Notice your shoulders beginning to relax, becoming a bit more aware of your breathing, and notice the weight of your body as you just relax, surrender, let go right now. And just have a sense of your system becoming a bit calmer, more present, more in this moment. And then inside of your mind, you hear the words very good, well done.

Just notice how it feels to be kind to yourself in that way. And then when you're ready, you can allow yourself to just open your eyes if your eyes were closed, just bring your attention a bit more back into the room and just notice. How do you feel right now?

One of a few things will have happened, you might have felt a shift in the pattern and just things calmed a little.



[00:39:59]

It's unlikely that in a few minutes that you had a dramatic, enormous change you might have done - if so that's great - but it might just be a subtle shift. You went from being so caught in the pattern, to being a bit more just connected to your body. It might be that nothing happened. It might need a bit more time. It might be there were many other patterns. You may need to go through the process or sequence a few times. It may even feel like the pattern got worse.

With a bit of a spotlight on the pattern, it might be you noticed it was running more. Whatever happened is OK, there's not a right outcome. There are many reasons why we might need to go through the pattern, often for longer, often on a sequence of patterns that are running. A question that often comes up at this point is should you - if another pattern comes in - should you stop and should you stop that version and stop that pattern and start again?

The answer to that question is, if the pattern coming in is so much that's really getting in the way, stop that and then work from there. If you can just sort of let it go and bring your attention back, then that may well be easier to do that in that moment.

Whatever happened, let's practice together again now.

If something came up for you in reaction to that, a thought or a concern, you can do the stop on that.

If the original pattern is still there, but perhaps a bit less so, you might want to do it again.

Or it might be that as you think about using the process going forwards, you notice certain thoughts. Really whatever's getting in the way of just being able to be more present or whatever's triggering your nervous system right now, use that as your pattern to work with.

So the first thing again, is to recognize that pattern. If it's easier to close your eyes, please close your eyes. And then when you're ready, whatever the word is, I'm going to say the word stop, but use the word that you've chosen as your word, make your gesture on three.

One, two, three, stop. You can relax your hands, notice the choice you got. You can continue going down a path of conditioning, an old way of thinking and being, you know, the results of doing that. Or you can make a choice to retrain your nervous system, to reset your system. As you choose that choice now, just allow yourself to let go of the grip on the thinking pattern and just bring your attention more to your breath, to the feeling of your arms, your legs, your breathing.

Notice the sensation of the palms of your hands, and the back of your hands, the temperature of your skin. Notice each of your fingers, your thumbs, your index fingers, middle fingers, ring fingers, little fingers. The feeling of your feet, your toes. Notice your breath dropping a little bit deeper, just allow yourself to become more connected right here, right now in this moment. And then inside of your mind, you hear the words, very good. Well done.



[00:43:04]

Just notice how that feels. Again, there may have been a different set of experiences. It may have been a bit easier the second time. For some people, it takes time.

The system takes time to settle. It's a bit like if we've had a big hit of adrenaline, we can stop feeding that, but there can still be adrenaline in our system and it can take time for that calming and settling to happen.

So we're not measuring the success of the STOP process on whether you go from an eight, let's say in terms of your nervous system, down to a three. It might be you stay at an eight, but you're not feeding it anymore, which just allows things to gradually begin to settle.

To condition a new pattern, sometimes we need to work on the same pattern a number of times. A bit like the dog that keeps jumping on the sofa.

We've got to remember to remind it to come off enough times.

Sometimes it's like peeling layers of an onion and you start off with a pattern of maybe beating yourself up. And underneath it there's an achiever pattern, there's a sense of not being good enough. So it can be sometimes layers of patterns we work with. And as I mentioned, sometimes it takes a while for the chemicals in your nervous system to settle. So even if you didn't feel an immediate settling, it doesn't mean the process isn't working or isn't going to work for you.

It maybe you need to go through five, ten rounds in a row of the same pattern or different patterns and allow your system a bit more time for things to calm and for things to settle.

There's another pattern that I particularly want to have a look out for here as well. These are patterns that are what I used to call secondary patterns, because they were sort of patterns that came up as we went through it.

The way I tend to describe it more now is that they're patterns that feed the issues.

So you've got your sort of underlying pattern you're working with. But then there are these patterns around it, which sort of perpetuate and continue the cycle. These are patterns like, 'I've tried everything. This won't work'.

So before you even give yourself an experience of using the STOP process, you've already decided it's not going to be effective. Or it might be, 'I don't have what it takes to do this. I just I can't do it. I won't be able to do it', or 'the technique is too simple', or 'I just won't be able to remember, there's too many steps. I can't do it'.



[00:45:24]

If you've got one of those patterns - when we do the next exercise and version of the process, I want you to work on that.

Those patterns are enormously toxic, because they get in the way of us having a new experience.

We may well be well on the track to things changing, but because of that pattern, we never actually get to the point of being able to change it. So please look out for and see those patterns and put those patterns through the process in the same way.

So let's practice together one more time. If you've got one of those patterns, you might want to pause the video and have a bit of time to reflect. If you've got one of those patterns, let's work on that.

Otherwise, it may be the original pattern that was there - it may be that's still there a bit - or it may be as you check in now, you think, well, what's there?

And actually what's there is something else. Maybe there's a pattern of suddenly you're thinking, 'oh my God, I've got to do this a thousand times a day. I won't be able to remember it. And if I don't catch every pattern, things aren't going to change'. But just notice what's there right now.

And if you need a bit more time to reflect, you can always pause the video as we go.

If you're happy to close your eyes, close your eyes, if not fine to keep your eyes open and just recognize the pattern. Notice the pattern that's there right now.

And then as you notice that, when you're ready on three, you're going to use your stop, it might be a different word, different gesture, but one, two, three stop.

Relax your hands, recognize neurons that fire together, wire together. You continue feeding that thought, you are literally training your mind and your nervous system to function a certain way.

If you don't want to do that anymore, you need to train your mind, your nervous system, to function a different way. So you make the conscious choice to bring your attention to your breath. To your body. To relax your shoulders. Feeling your feet on the ground.

Just notice there being a bit more space between your breaths, your body feeling perhaps a bit heavier as more of the weight of your body is held. You're not having to hold on so much, you can allow yourself to become more relaxed.



[00:47:45.]

You can allow yourself to let go, to be able to surrender. Right here, right now, in this moment. Notice the sensation of the heels of your feet. In your toes, just wiggling your toes, feeling the muscles in your face relaxing a bit more.

And then when you're ready, hearing the words 'very good, well done'. Just noticing how it feels to speak to yourself right now in that way. And then if you had your eyes closed, feel free to open your eyes and just notice how do you feel right now? What's the impact of using the process, using the STOP process to just help calm and settle yourself in this moment?

So a question that often comes up at this point is how do I practice when I'm around other people?

I don't want to walk around making strange gestures and saying strange words. Well, here's the thing.

It is possible - if you've ever had a history of anxiety - it is absolutely possible to be anxious around other people, like really like worried-anxious and hide it, like no one knows you're doing it.

Therefore, it is possible to do the STOP process and people not know that you're doing it. Often in conversation, not that I'm advocating this as a general way of being in the world, but we don't normally to give our full attention to what's happening.

Particularly if they're running patterns. We're already not giving our full attention. So giving some attention to stopping those patterns is something that you can do.

You can visualize yourself doing it.

So you can almost in your mind, you can see yourself kind of capture the pattern, you see yourself doing the STOP, you see yourself relaxing and see yourself coming into your body.

You can also just feel the steps, so you can almost like you can notice the pattern. You can feel yourself and inside of your mind say stop, I don't want to do that.

And then you just feel your body. And we will come to this more in module five. But just feel yourself sensing your arms, your legs, your breath. You just feel yourself coming more deeply into your body in that moment.

It takes a bit more practice around other people. Sometimes what you might need to do is to go from doing it around - sort of the best you can - to maybe going to your car or the bathroom and just taking a few minutes to - you might not say the word necessarily - as people might hear you, but you could really make the gesture at that point.



[00:50:11]

So do the best you can around others. But you want to be as proactive as you can doing it with yourself.

Remember the five P's? Patience, be patient. This takes time. The process is simple. It's not necessarily easy.

Precision. Make sure your stop doesn't become telling yourself off, or your well done doesn't become 'urr well done'. Make sure you are precise about those particular steps of how we're doing them.

You need to practice. I'll come to in a moment the homework around that. You need to be persistent. Some of these patterns have been going for a long time and you need to be consistent in your consistency of catching them and working with them.

And you need to persevere because sometimes it might feel like you're doing the process and things are not changing as much as you want them to. So if you persevere, you're going to get that lasting impact and that lasting change.

So there's also a question of how does this interface with meditation? Here's how I look at it.

Meditation helps calm your system overall. Remember meditation also by just letting go of the grip of our thoughts, it gives us more perspective on our thinking. It loosens the grip of the habit.

The problem, though, of meditation is we're up here and we calm and we come down to here and we stop meditating and we go back up again. The body has a homeostatic balance of being up here. The stop process stops the patterns that re-stress the system.

So you calm down to here, and then your achiever pattern comes in - you stop and you reset your system - and then you start to ramp up your anxiety pattern - you stop and you calm and you reset your system.

So it's through the STOP process that we stop the system becoming constantly reactivated.

And if we have patterns in the way of meditation, it'll also help work with those.

So you might do some rounds of the STOP process before you do your meditation practice. To help calm and settle things to make it easier to do it.

This next point is very important. How does this relate to our emotions?

We are not trying to stop our emotions. We're going to get this much more in modules six and seven. We're going to work on feeling and allowing our emotions. If anything, we're going to stop the patterns of us running away and rejecting and distracting away from our feelings and emotions. If emotions come up, we want to let those process and be digested. We're not trying to stop those.



[00:52:48]

We want to learn to feel our emotions. But we can often run a lot of patterns around our emotions, like I'm never going to get out of this. I can't cope with this. This is going to be too much. Things are never going to change.

We want to stop those patterns, but we're stopping the thinking patterns to come more into our body, to feel and to digest and to process what we feel and we will come to that much, much more detail and it will become much clearer.

We're also not trying to stop symptoms. We're trying to stop the thought patterns and the habits, and the things that drive maladaptive stress response, that cause symptoms or perpetuate symptoms. We're also trying to stop the patterns we have around symptoms. Oh, my God, I hate the symptoms. Why have I got it? It's never going to change. It's always going to be this way.

If that's the symptom and that's the reaction to the symptom, that's often what keeps it in place. If we can soften in our response to the symptom, often a symptom can open and it can change.

So anxiety patterns about symptoms, we want to work on those, but we're not trying to stop the symptoms themselves.

So, for example, if you have chronic pain, you're not trying to stop the pain. You will drive yourself crazy doing that.

But all of the 'oh my God, this pain is so terrible. I'm never going to get over this. Why have I got this? I can't deal with it'. The more we can calm all of that, then what we find is as the system's calmer, either the quality of the pain changes, the intensity of the pain changes.

But we find that's what ultimately has the impact.

So what next?

Remember the thought diary we did a module three? That's great material to start using the STOP process with.

We need to start practicing this multiple times a day. We can be proactive. So having scheduled time two, three, four or five times a day, ten times a day where you commit five, ten minutes to doing the process. We also can be reactive, so that we get triggered or into a maladaptive stress response we notice it and we use the STOP process to reset things and bring them back to balance.



[00:55:01]

What I'm not going to do is be overly prescriptive of exactly how many times a day you do this. I know some people would like me to do that, but I want you to learn to listen to your body and listen to your experience.

I would recommend having multiple points in the day. You do not need to stop every thought for this to be effective. You do not want to get into a pattern - if you run an achiever pattern or a perfectionist pattern and you're trying to achieve at this and get it perfect - that's the pattern to work with.

So go gently, have a sort of do the best you can, but if you feel you're getting too agitated, trying to stop things, take pause, leave it, come back to it later. But also be - so for some people, it's going to require a lot more discipline than you normally use.

For other people, you're going to need to go much more gently than you would habitually do. Listen to your body and listen to your experience. This is not about going to war with yourself. This is about gently working to retrain and to reset your system. And particularly in this module, the sort of supplementary Q&A videos I think will be helpful to answer some of the questions that come up.

I tried to keep the modules as concise as I can, but the key ingredients that everyone needs and then some of the more personal things that come up, I'm going to cover in those videos.

So coming up next module, we're going to learn the Presence Process. It's effectively the STOP process with an emphasis on some other pieces we're going to add in. We'll also talk about some of the troubleshooting, some of the places where it might not be working, challenges and how to respond to and work with that.

That in Module six, we're going to start bringing your emotions into the process. At this point, you might be thinking, 'Alex, I came into this program, because I want to work on trauma. And yes, I get I've got to reset my system, but my challenges are my feelings and emotions are what do I do with those?' We're absolutely going to come to that.

You might be someone saying, Alex, I don't have any feelings and emotions. We're going to come to that as well.

Go gently, please do your homework. This has the potential to transform and change your life. Play the long game, put the work in, be patient, be gentle. Do not measure your progress by any particular moment or experience.

We're looking at the trend over time in your nervous system, not how you feel in any one day or any one moment. Hope that's been helpful. Thanks for watching.

