

6. We are all capable of change

In this book we will show you how being able to **flex** could enrich your old age, beat stress, bring you loving relationships and open your mind to opportunities that might otherwise pass you by. We will help you to put it into practice with examples and practical guidance. Meanwhile, there is another reason I urge you to consider the benefits of **flex**.

In general, I have found that the differences between people in terms of the things about them that are alterable are far greater and more important than the differences between them in terms of the parts that are fixed or harder to change (perhaps their IQ, educational history, genes or age). We cannot change the structural things, but we do have the capability to change many fluid aspects of our own behaviours and personality traits. You no doubt know two people who are of the same chronological age, but one thinks like an energetic teenager and the other has a decaying mindset. How does that happen? It isn't all fixed and predetermined. Many characteristics we hold are changeable, even though it may not seem so because they have become habitual. We can do something about so many facets of who we are. That is another reason for **flex**.

Many people find change difficult. In my personal and professional life I have seen countless examples of people honestly saying one thing yet doing another. An example might be the man who says he wishes to lose weight but reaches for a second helping of dessert. The girl who orders a giant-sized hamburger and a 'diet' cola. The woman who wants to take up jogging but says she can't give up smoking. People struggle, it seems, even to make the changes that they know would transform their lives. Then there are people who repeat the same mistakes and appear not to notice, driven as they are by their habitual behaviour patterns. The man who pays his wife no attention, yet complains that she 'nags'. The woman who constantly breaks arrangements and wonders why her friends avoid her.

Some people have enormous energy but it is wrongly channelled; others have intentions that are good but behaviours that do them harm.



Everywhere there are people who stress themselves, people stuck in a rut, people who fail to spot the mistakes in what they do and say (yet they would notice them in others), people who do not learn from their mistakes, and people bound by habits of thinking and behaviour. We all do these things to a greater or lesser degree. We can all benefit from being able to make small changes, if we only knew where and how. Later in this book we'll describe the techniques we've used to help those who want to overcome life's challenges, to become more coherent, and to have better relationships and altogether more fulfilling lives. At the very core of these techniques lies the ability to **flex**.