

# MEDITATION

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We don't have an eternity to realise our dreams, only the time we are here.

Susan Taylor



## The present moment is the point from which all future possibilities emerge.

By Nick Freedman

By default that it is not a reality already for you, when you decide to consciously create a new future reality for yourself, you will need to leave the safe confines of your comfort zone. Your journey through life will sometimes present you with the inevitable choice, of doing the same you've always done, and having more of the same, or venturing into the unknown.

And at these pivotal points you often have to stare into the face of old fears in order to progress, and with that comes stress. Stress is an internal state of mental or emotional tension that arises when demanding or adverse circumstances, go beyond your ability to cope. It can quickly disarm you, and in some cases slow or prevent progress being

made on the consciously evolving journey to greatness. So it's important to be aware of the origins of your stress and develop means to reduce your stress levels, to help you become a powerful creator of reality.

Meditation is a principle practice for anyone seeking to navigate through life more consciously. The practice arrived in the West from a band of pioneer spiritual teachers in the 1960s and has been growing in acceptance and adoption ever since. In recent times with the great advances in neuroscience, science has developed the ability to observe the effect of meditation on the brain, and numerous high profile research studies have helped to increase the credibility of meditation in mainstream

thinking. Any practice which is recognised in Harvard Business Review as an essential tool for being an effective leader is worth paying further attention to.

When you have mastered the art of meditation, and incorporated it into your life, you might say to others that it feels like the easiest and most natural thing in the world. However, whilst you are learning how to meditate and practicing it, there's every chance that you will encounter a number of challenges. As such, the path of becoming a meditator includes a mix of learning, practice, discipline, trial and error and self observation. It is best viewed as a learning journey, and like all journeys, it begins with grasping some of the basic elements.



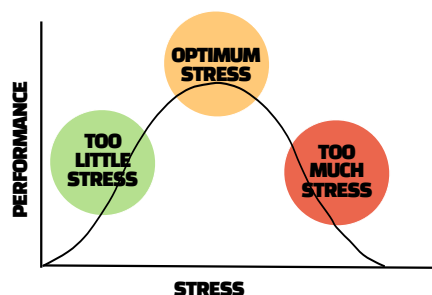
Before we explore the 'how to', we'll delve into the benefits of bringing the practice of meditation into your life.

## The cost of stress

Stress is expensive. It costs Australia \$15 billion per year and America \$300 billion per year. Stress at it's worst can cause long term chronic illness and it manifests in different ways for different people. This simple diagram below with performance plotted on the vertical axis and stress on the horizontal, helps us understand 3 territories of stress.

When there is too little stress in your body, your performance or output will be low. Consider how you feel on your first day back at work after a experiencing a relaxing 2 week holiday. Things move more slowly and it can be hard to get things done. This zone is not an ideal place to be as the body is not overly responsive to the stimulus it receives.

As the stress levels start to increase, so too does performance, until it reaches a peak, or optimum level of stress for you. This territory is a great place, which many call 'being in the zone'. This is highly productive state which has also been called 'Flow'.

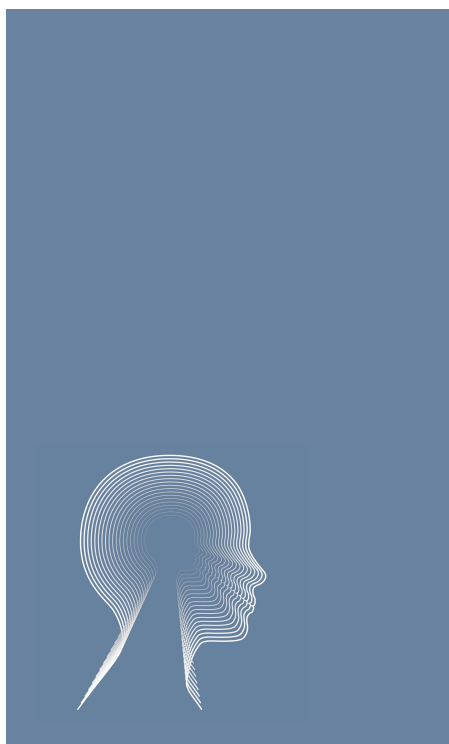


When stress goes beyond the 'optimum level', your performance will reduce because the mental, emotional and biological effects of stress start to limit what you can handle in your system.

## Benefits of meditation

Stress is at the root of many diseases. Meditating helps to reduce your stress levels enabling you to start changing some of the causal factors which impact your level of personal wellbeing.

Some examples include reducing blood pressure, boosting the immune system



**"Whether you think you can or think you can't, you are right".**

**Henry Ford**

and accelerating the body's healing capabilities. There are psychological and emotional benefits too, including an ability to overcome depression, reduce negative emotions like anger and a greater capacity for emotional self management.

Spiritually, it will help you increase your self awareness and strengthen your intuitive nature, both of which contribute to helping you live a more conscious life.

In addition to these benefits, using creative visualisation techniques to create more of what you want in life becomes easier when you've been meditating for a while.

## Neuroscience

The first distinction for us to make is between the brain and the environment. One is internal. The world in here. And the other is external. The world out there. Your brain is constantly receiving stimulus from the environment around you, via the five senses of sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. As it processes this information, the world outside of you is made sense of internally through a series of complex interactions involving movements of energy in the form of thought streams and chemicals. The end result of how your brain processes the information, creates your mind and your personal experience.

The brain has 3 major domains each which affect how you function in life. The first is the reptilian brain, which sits at the top of your spine. This territory controls your essential co-ordination through bodily functions such as heart rate, breathing, temperature and balance. It does a great job of keeping your physical body regulated, without the need for the conscious part of you to even think about it. Consider that you don't need to remember to breathe or beat your heart. It just happens.

The second part of the brain is the limbic system and this plays a large part in causing your feelings and emotions to come into existence. A key part of the limbic system that we need to understand is the amygdala, which we'll come onto soon. The third part of the brain is the neocortex and this takes up over 65% of the space in your head. It controls the logical, rational, linear thought processes. It is the seat of freewill and without it you'd not be able to function effectively in the modern world. This part of the brain enables you to make decisions about reality and choose what to do next with your life.

When experiences work out positively the neocortex can remember to do them again, and when you want a different outcome or to change something that's not working, it's this part of the brain which is active. Becoming a conscious creator, requires you to make use of the neocortex's gifts.

# Meditation helps you transcend & go beyond habitual responses that limit your potential.

## Fight or flight response

Let's go back inside the limbic system for a moment to a tiny part of the brain called the amygdala. The amygdala plays a pivotal role in your survival, by keeping you safe, as it is on the constant lookout for anything which it perceives as a threat. As information is processed through the amygdala from the surrounding environment, it scans back through your memories to see if there are any matches with previously remembered threats.

When a past memory matches the current stimulus, alarm bells are signaled and the body's fight or flight response kicks into gear. Adrenalin is secreted into your bloodstream and a feeling of fear is experienced throughout your body.

The body responds in numerous ways, so that it can either fight the problem, or run away. This part of the brain was very useful for early man. If a lion ate your friend, a memory would be stored

in the brain and the next lion that came along would stimulate the fight or flight response, preparing the body for action. So, nowadays we live in a world with less primal predators, so the threats are different for each of us. The interesting thing is that the threats are not always real. They simply resemble something which you experienced in your past and is stored as a painful memory. The job of the amygdala is to keep you away from experiencing it again, but in doing so it can also keep you locked up in your comfort zone. Your job is to become conscious enough to make sense of whether the threat is real or not and this is where meditation can help.

## Neuroplasticity

The good news is that although the neocortex kicks in after the limbic system has responded to a threat, it is possible to train this part of the brain to over ride the fight or flight response by becoming more conscious of our thinking patterns. What neuroscience is

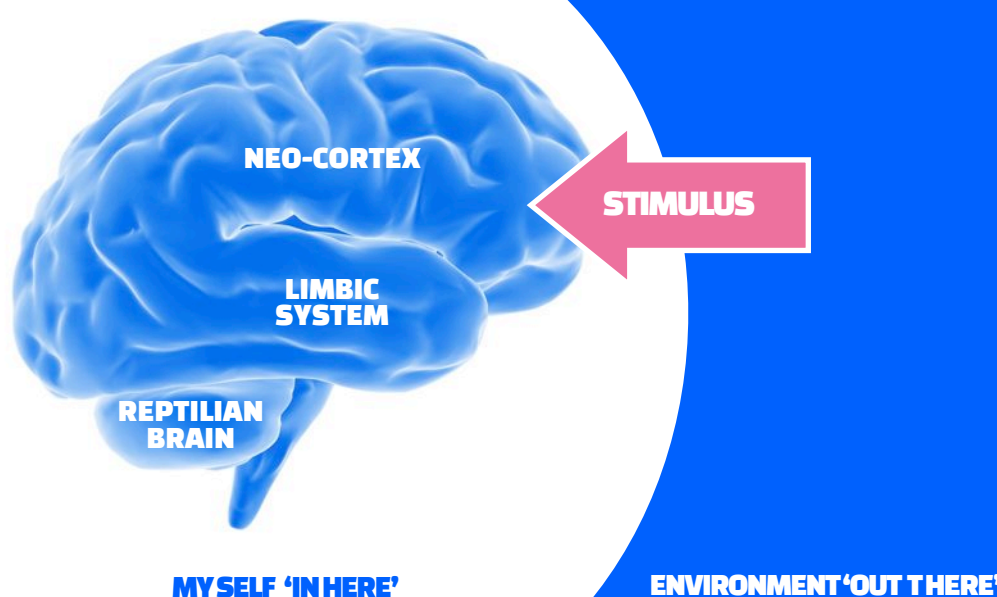
teaching us is that we are not fixed, rigid and hardwired humans, where we can only process reality based on previous understanding of what we've learned. Instead the structures of the brain, called neuro-nets have a fluid quality. They can change and reform. These neuronets, which are made of brain cells called neurons, are in constant communication with each other through movements of energy, which you experience as thoughts.

You can see these neuro-nets in the picture overleaf and the electrical transfers are thoughts. When these neurons connect, they 'wire' together and this forms clusters of intelligence. The more they connect through repetition of the same thoughts, the stronger they become bonded together.

So in terms of your conscious experience, the more often you think about something, the greater space it will take up in your life. Or what you focus on grows.

The brain processes 400 billion bits of information per second. The conscious part of your mind is only aware of 200 of those bits.

*Dr Joe Dispenza*

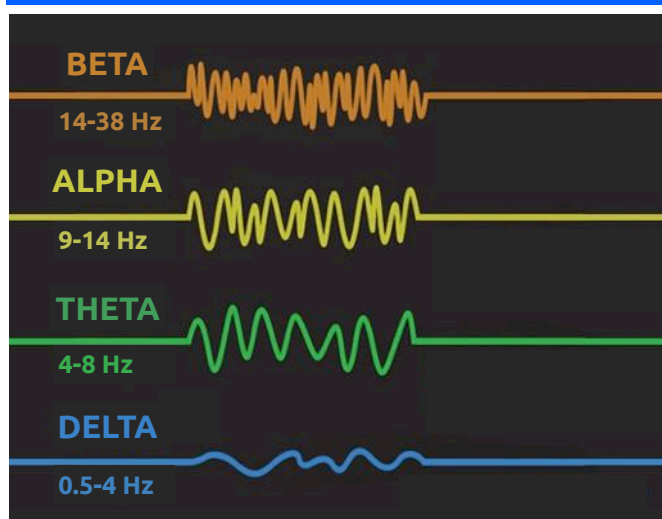






**“Our intention creates our reality”.**

Wayne Dyer



## Meditation stimulates the creative states of your brain, to help enable high performance.

Your brain activity can be understood by brainwaves patterns, which are electrical impulses. Depending on what you're focussing on, these will vary in frequency. Brainwaves are measured in cycles per second, or Hz, and the brain will emit more than one type of brainwave at any one time. This body of work was pioneered by Anna Wise, who explained that achieving an optimum balance of the following four types of brainwaves was the hallmark of having an awakened, high performing mind.

### Beta

Beta waves range between 14-38 HZ. Beta brainwaves help you connect with and make meaning of what is happening in your external environment. They are the hallmark of your normal everyday thinking state. When you in a busy meeting and having to focus on external objects, beta is turned on.

### Alpha

Alpha waves range between 9-14 HZ. When you start to relax via meditation, your brain activity slows from the rapid patterns of Beta into more gentle Alpha waves. Alpha is synonymous with letting go of attachments and tapping into your creative genius. This level of brainwave activity is the bridge between the conscious and subconscious mind and helps to enable problem solving and creative visualisation.

### Theta

Theta waves range between 4-8 HZ. As your meditation practice deepens, you start to build bridges with the theta state. Theta is present whilst you dream, although can be consciously accessed during the practice of meditation too. Theta is a powerful creative brainwave pattern that can feel like you're having a deeply spiritual experience beyond the constraints of time and space. It can help with learning and memory and whenever you're functioning in the zone, theta activity is present the brain.

### Delta

Delta waves range between 0.5-4 HZ. Delta patterns are present in deep sleep. They can also be present during meditative states in combination with other brainwaves. Delta connects you with the quantum field in ways which can never be consciously understood. This subconscious state, is where your intuition or gut feeling emerges from. It is also a hallmark of empathetic resonance with other people.

The awakened mind, high performing mind arises when there is a balance of all 4 brainwave states. The beta activity brings conscious awareness, alpha brings creativity, theta enables relaxed connection with the sub conscious and delta connects you with the quantum field to allow intuitive inspiration to bubble up through to conscious awareness.

# Follow these six steps to make meditation an integral part of your conscious journey.

Mastering the art of meditation is best viewed as a learning journey, and like all journeys, it begins with grasping the basic elements of meditation. There is a guided meditation MP3 that you can download that will get you started, that recaps all theory we're about to explore.

## 1 Become the observer

Whilst little time is spent reflecting on the contents of the mind, the awareness of how it influences your daily choices will be limited. Meditation is a simple process that helps you observe or witness the inner process of your mind, with a view to developing mastery over it. As you build this innate capacity for witnessing your thought streams, you strengthen your ability to make choices that align with what you truly desire in life. In order to start seeing your mind this way, it becomes important to explore the concept of the dualistic nature of mind.

Consider that there are 2 aspects of mind. There is the thought flow, which we call the contents. These thoughts arise constantly into the conscious mind from the subconscious beliefs, values and needs that sit below the surface of awareness. More is taught about these aspects of the mind later in NAV24. And then there is the witness, or awareness of the contents, which we call the observer. The observer has no real content, but rather can be seen as a neutral unchanging aspect of the self which witnesses all things that arise in the mind. Some Eastern traditions call this the authentic, true, real or big self and classify the contents of mind as the little self, identity or ego. At the start of your journey, it can be confusing to take on too many names, as the mind can get hung up what they all mean, so for now, simply know that there is the contents of the mind and the observer of the contents. Practicing meditation, helps you develop the observer, and just like going to the gym to do a workout, the more you practice the stronger it becomes.

## 2 Develop a strong posture

Finding the right posture, plays a key role in meditation. It is essential that you are comfortable. You'll have seen many pictures of yogic master sat cross legged on the ground.

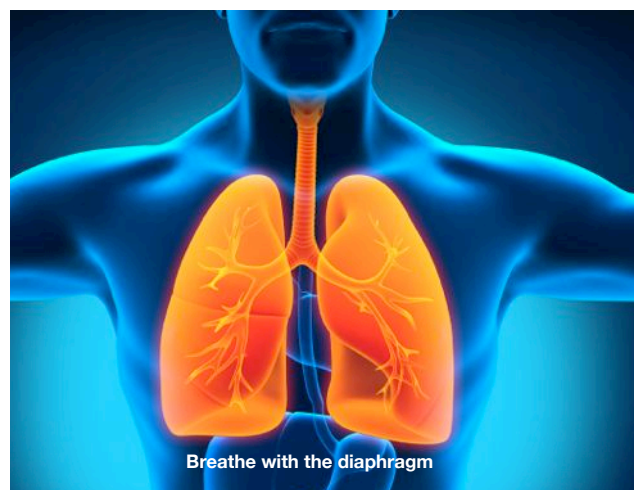


Unless you have experience of this type of meditation, don't go there for now. You'll need a chair that enables you to sit in an upright position. When you are meditating, your feet should touch the ground, so if they don't reach, place a pillow, or cushion underneath them.

It's also a good idea to take your shoes off, so you can feel your feet connecting with the earth beneath them. The next thing to become aware of is your spine. Focus on base of your spine on the chair for a moment, and then become aware of each vertebrae moving all the way up to your neck. Imagine each one is stacked neatly on top of the one below it, so that your spine is vertical and spacious.

Gently drop your chin down and in. And then place your hands on your thighs either palm up or palm down. Or fold them in your lap, whichever feels most comfortable. Before starting any meditation, take a moment to make sure you feel comfortable and make the adjustments you need to. Once you feel you have found the right position for you, it's time to close your eyes and prepare for meditation.

## 3 Breathe consciously



There are many ways to bring awareness to your breathing whilst meditating, and one of the popular ones is to breathe consciously using your diaphragm.

The diaphragm is a huge muscle that rests horizontally across the base of the rib cage. When you breathe using this part of your body, rather than your chest, it pulls more air into the deeper part of lungs, enabling more oxygen to reach the bloodstream. This conscious form of breathing counteracts the effects of the fight or flight response, so it is a tremendously effective way to begin the process of reducing your stress levels. It can be used as a relaxation tool throughout the day, even when you are not in meditation.

# As you learn how to observe the contents of your mind, life starts to change from within.

In order to become aware of this process, a simple exercise you can do now is become aware of what part of your body is moving when you inhale and exhale. Place one hand on your chest and another on your belly, then close your eyes. As you breathe, notice which parts are moving. Was your chest or your belly moving? Diaphragmatic breathing is the process of consciously using your belly to inhale and exhale.

## 4 Have a singular focal point

An essential element to your meditation practice is learning to focus your attention on a single thing. This ability to pay attention for sustained periods of time is the hallmark of having developed your observer to a point where it can pierce through the otherwise wild and erratic contents of the mind. To do this, you need to choose a single point of focus for your meditation, and this is where a range of options open up to you, which you can experiment with. The Eastern traditions have a range of sanskrit words which you can experiment with, however these words can sometimes hold little

meaning in western culture and act as a barrier to progress. As such, the suggestion is to choose between focussing on the in and out of the breathe, or a single word like calm, focus, rest or present.

## 5 Focus, lose focus, refocus

One way to understand meditation is with the simple metaphor of the sky. The sky is ever present. It's always there. As is the observer. And the clouds come and go and take different forms. These are the thoughts. At sometimes there are a few fluffy clouds and other times raging storms, as is also true of your mind and the inner state it causes. The visual below illustrates the thoughts and the observer of the thoughts.

As you meditate, you will notice that thoughts come and go. A common assumption people make when first learning to meditate is that unless your mind has rested in a place of deep inner emptiness then you have somehow failed. This is not the case. The mind has a continuous quality to it, which means that it never really stops. There is a stream of thoughts that pass by in the

mind, like clouds, and whereas it is possible to slow these thought patterns down, fully dissolving them into an empty formless state of mind cannot be achieved by trying or having that as a goal.

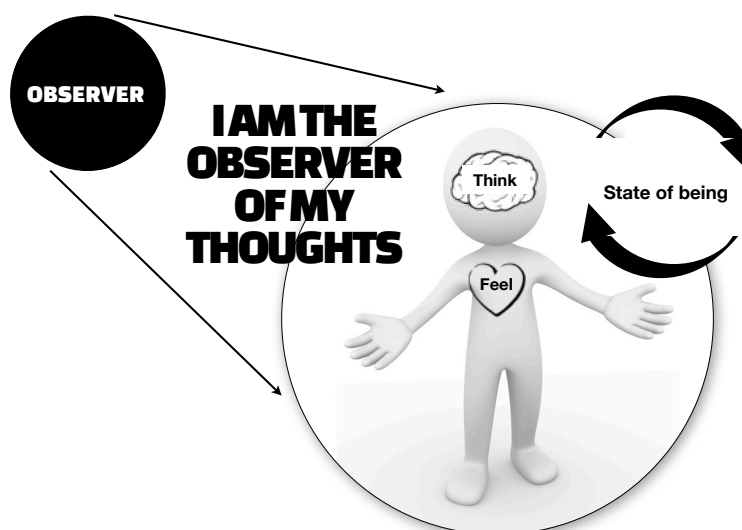
So, as you focus your attention on the breathe or your chosen word, you'll become aware that you have focus, and then your mind will drift off. This is perfectly normal. After sometime, you will then realise you have lost focus and as you do, you also found the focus again. This duality, of being the observer and being the thoughts is where your attention will bounce between. This is perfectly normal. Your role is simply to keep bringing back your focus to the breathe and/or your word.

## 6 Anchor in with the MP3

This tool and the learning movie are designed to teach you a theoretical conceptual framework to get you started. To further aid your learning, there is a downloadable mp3 that you can load into your iphone or music player, to help you commence the journey of practicing meditation.

The quieter you become, the more you can hear.

Ram Dass



# Meditation & Consciousness Tracker

My Practice - how I meditate					
Date			Hours of sleep last night		
When I meditated	Morning	Lunch	Afternoon	Evening	Night
Length of meditation	<5 mins	5 mins	10 mins	20mins	>20mins
Where I meditated	Home	Work	Nature	Other (state)	
Observations / notes about my meditation practice today					

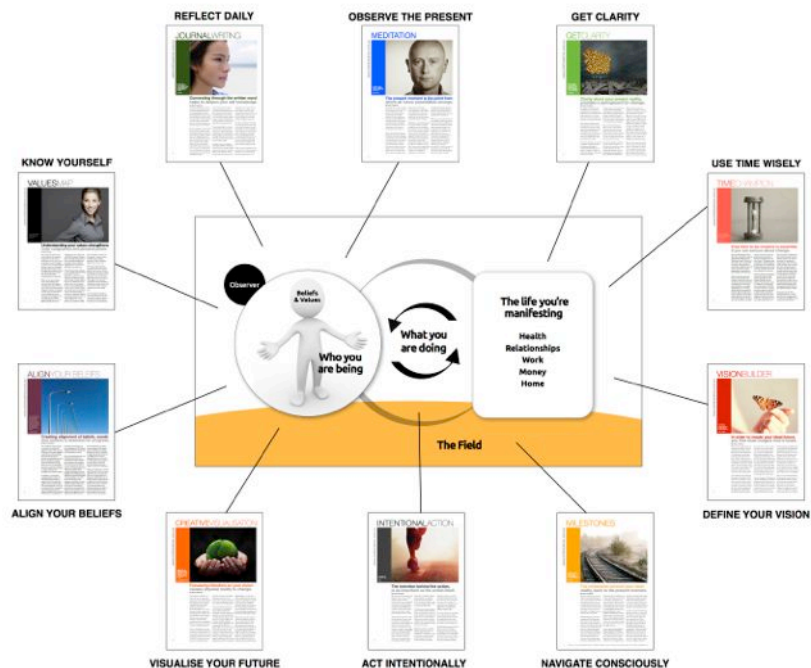
Busyness of mind - what my thought patterns are like today					
Before meditation	Excessive / too busy / wildness	Full mind / alert state	Moments of clarity / calm	Focussed / clarity	Calm / empty / stillness
After meditation	Excessive / too busy / wildness	Full mind / alert state	Moments of clarity / calm	Focussed / clarity	Calm / empty / stillness

Emotional state of being - how I feel today							
Before meditation	Loving	Joyful	Angry	Sad	Shameful	Lonely	Happy
	Guilty	Excited	Painful	Fearful	Anxious	Other (state)	
After meditation	Loving	Joyful	Angry	Sad	Shameful	Lonely	Happy
	Guilty	Excited	Painful	Fearful	Anxious	Other (state)	

My life today & new emerging consciousness	
Questions I have about my life	
New thoughts or awareness that emerged today in my meditation	
Moments of synchronicity that I've experienced lately	



## Your Manifestor Journey



Manifestor helps you play life bigger, by teaching you the skills needed to turn the vision of your ideal life into a physical manifest reality. This tool is one of 10, that makes up the complete learning journey.



## Social Learning Gym

If you like to study in a social environment with others, the social learning gym is worth exploring. Spanning across 4 weeks, you'll join other manifestors in a weekly online workshop, as well as getting 1-to-1 mentoring from Nick. You can join the public program, or book Nick directly to facilitate a learning gym for you and 8-10 of your friends, (you find a venue, then we work together with our video technology).

Visit [www.manifestor.tv](http://www.manifestor.tv) or email [clarity@nickfreedman.com.au](mailto:clarity@nickfreedman.com.au) to find out more.



## About Nick Freedman

Since 2002, Nick Freedman has been designing and facilitating programs which have helped 1000s to transform their lives and businesses from the inside out. His clients include organisations like Salesforce, Yahoo, Westpac, AoL, Ronald McDonald House & Coca-Cola, as well as 100s of SMEs & not-for-profits.

To gain more insight into Nick and the inspiration behind why he built the manifestor program, watch his TEDx talk "10 questions I asked the ocean" at [www.nickfreedman.com.au](http://www.nickfreedman.com.au)

