

Symphony

There are weight-loss programs that are like happy tunes played on a tin-whistle. There are some that are like a funeral march played on the low octaves of a cheap pedal organ.

I like to think of Live Free From Obesity, or LFFO, as a symphony by Mozart, or Beethoven, or Mahler, or Stravinsky.

If you are a music lover, you'll probably think that's a pretty wide repertoire. If you're not, it probably seems pretty highbrow, which is OK, because the truth of the matter is that LFFO is a Do-It-Yourself symphony kit, with a lot of sample symphonies included, free for you to try, and for most people, one of the included symphonies will do the trick.

Let me explain. Imagine Beethoven, sitting down to write the Ninth Symphony.

He starts with what is to him, a blank sheet of paper. To us it isn't blank; it has sets of five thin lines stretched across it. These sets of lines are called staves, and Beethoven writes the notes on the staves.

Each staff is a tune that one instrument, or maybe one *set* of instruments in the orchestra plays. He might decide to start by writing a tune for the 1st violins, and after a while, on a second staff he starts to write the tune that he wants the 2nd violins to play.

If you think of the horizontal bands of paper, he might divide them first into the major instrument groups of the orchestra: strings, woodwind, brass, percussion, etc. Then he might divide the strings into instruments: violins, violas, cellos, double basses, and within these he may want more than one melody to be played by violins at one time, hence first, second, third violins.

I think you see that this gives amazing richness to the music.

But then we have *vertical* bands on the paper, representing stages of the symphony by time. We have the movements of the symphony, and within that the overture, the statement of the theme, reprise, finale etc.

Multi-dimensional music.

As opposed to a jaunty tune on penny whistle.

Both have their place in the world.

I realised the need for a multi-dimensional program when I lost my 100lbs (7 stones, 45kg), using a brilliant nutritional program, but with no *integrated* advice about anything else. It was like a great tune on a penny whistle. It wasn't complete enough as an experience. Something was missing.

People said, "oh, try this exercise, it worked for me", or "that diet can't possibly work, I read it in a book". I was swayed his way and that by advice, prevailing fashion, science, superstition, hope, advertising. I didn't know what was *me*.

I remember when I was a kid at school, my dad wouldn't let me have a record player, or a radio, so I didn't know which pop idols were in fashion. I'd say I liked The Shadows, and everyone would laugh; I should be liking Elvis. And the thing was, I didn't even know whether I liked The Shadows. I just thought I should.

Twenty years later a really good friend of mine played me some classical music, and "showed" me (I don't know what the auditory equivalent of "to show" is) what it was she liked about it. Gradually I began to hear it differently; hear things I hadn't heard before, and I started to like it. I began to form my own taste. I didn't like all the things she liked, but I began to discover what I liked.

I needed to find the weight-loss equivalent, and so began researching, starting with my 30+ year's experience in the "personal development industry", and beginning with my most recent teacher, T Harv Eker. Harv's subject is financial freedom, and he began his journey to success when, broke, and with a string of failed businesses behind him, back home living in his parent's basement, a wealthy friend of his father's said, "Harv, had it ever occurred to you that rich people *think* differently from other people?"

It hadn't, and Harv went and researched how rich people think, compared that to how *he* thought about things, trained himself to think like rich people, and got rich. He put it all in a book, "Secrets of the Millionaire Mind". So I began to wonder how slim and fit people think.

And in Harv's trainings, he has a number of simple but powerful models. T->F->A->R is one of them. Your thoughts lead to your feelings which lead to your actions, which lead to your results. Change your thoughts, and get different results. Hmm.

Next, Harv suggests that for change to happen we need to pay attention to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Well, that certainly seemed helpful to me, struggling to keep off the 100lbs that I had lost.

Another Harv model, probably not original to him, but useful nevertheless is the conditions necessary for change:

- High Impact
- High Frequency
- Ongoing Support

Implicit in there is the need for other people, and so to Harv's Physical, Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual, I want to add Social ... The people dimension.

Other people interact positively with our efforts to change by:

- Supplying information and skills (teachers and instructors)
- Supporting and encouraging (coaches and helpful friends)
- Being companions and providing what I call "positive context" or "social proof"
- Inspiring (mentors)

They can also interact negatively with our efforts to change by just not understanding, resisting our changes, interfering ("Oh go on, one more little helping can't hurt, can it? Don't be a spoil sport").

If we look at those conditions for change, it's obvious that other people can provide the ongoing support. And if there are large numbers of people, all aiming for the same or similar changes at the same time, that can help give high impact. That implies we probably need a seminar for the change to happen ... Or, at least, to begin.

So here's my "Symphony of Change". We have five major sections to our orchestra:

- Our Bodies
- Our Minds
- Our Emotions
- Our Social Environment
- Our Spiritual Life

Within those, there are different instruments. When thinking about our bodies, we need to consider the biochemistry of nutrition, and we need to think about exercise, amongst other things. And as every body, as well as everybody, is different, we will need to have different programs for different people.

Within our minds, we can consider the way language programs us, the way we encode our beliefs, the way we are affected by our perceptions, and so on. It all gets quite complicated and quite daunting, quite quickly.

And if we think of the vertical dimensions on our sheet music, there are going to be different stages of the process. An obese person unused to physical exercise is going to need a different regime at the start of the program than they will when they've been going for three months, six months, a year.

So this is the underlying pattern that we use in LFFO. What are the different tunes that different instruments in different sections of the orchestra are playing, and how does that play out at different stages of the symphony? Hopefully, all will become clear.