

The Rapid Enlightenment Process: Letting Go of the Survival Mind to Experience Sustained Peace, Joy and Well-Being

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the Rapid Enlightenment Process (REP). An intervention focused on entrepreneurs and business executives to increase their psychological resources. The treatment has four components: (1) Understanding of the survival mind; (2) Acceptance; (3) Recontextualization; and (4) Adoption of the “Enlightened Perspectives,” helpful hermeneutics and heuristics to sustain the experience of peace and positive emotions until it becomes a habit. The paper builds on arguments and ideas presented in a theoretical model with the primary objective of formulating a set of propositions detailing factors affecting the REP and the effectiveness at each of its phases. Since REP is an innovation lacking empirical evidence, its claims are supported by a logic model referencing theories and research in the field of positive psychology, neuroscience, and an integrated framework of emotional theories. This paper aims to contribute to the well-being intervention literature to guide empirical research, and ultimately to evaluate REP.

1. Introduction

According to the World Health Organization (2020), chronic work stress and burnout are two silent epidemics. A global survey study shows that, during the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic, the propensity to experience negative emotions associated with burnout in the workplace reached a world all time high (Gallup, 2021). Entrepreneurial and self-employed business activities can produce higher stress levels than other work activities due to the risks involved (Heikkilä et al., 2019). Entrepreneurs also experience higher levels of self-established demands and expectations. The Rapid Enlightenment Process (REP) is an intervention designed as a resource for entrepreneurs and business leaders to enhance skills and abilities to develop self-reliance (Seaward, 1989). The aim of REP is that participants experience sustained peace, joy, awareness and overall well-being. Since entrepreneurs have traits and skills that help them cope more easily with stress than other populations. REP builds on their higher levels of work engagement, optimism and self-efficacy (Heikkilä et al., 2019). REP has been practiced in business environments for more than 12 years, suggesting that it could be possible to adapt and diffuse REP as a stress and well-being intervention to other settings and populations. This

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article aims to review and present an in-depth description of the REP and to define the roles of different theories that indicate the authors' positioning to clarify how its contribution should be evaluated (Jaakkola, 2020). To do so I shall present a logic model that includes concepts and scientific advancements from the fields of biology, psychology, social psychology, positive psychology, and neuroscience. This paper primarily aims to add to the literature a novel intervention focused on well-being, its theoretical foundations, and guide future empirical research to evaluate this intervention and its potential effects on personal and emotional well-being in the face of stress.

2. Methods

To describe REP in depth, I will provide as a context a stress and emotions literature review, suggest the justification and integration of the choices of theories to support the claims of REP, and provide a list of the concepts that may explain - describe REP in a way that it could be understood, analyzed, and evaluated. Secondly, I am going to present REP from an intervention perspective. To do so I am going to rely on the Template for Intervention Description and Replication Checklist by Hoffmann et al. (2014). This framework belongs to the intervention research literature and serves as a reliable criteria on how any intervention should be described in terms of its implementation. Finally, I will propose a logic model useful to evaluate REP, presenting the theoretical assumptions and propositions that support its outcomes.

2.1. Literature Review

The section aims to present and explain selected concepts and theories useful to understand the causes of human uneasiness and the bio-psychosocial mechanisms of change that operate in the REP.

Spirituality and Emotions. It can be argued that a key goal of all spiritual traditions and practices is to emphasize the importance of connection, community, compassion, and empathy as means for well-being. Ruggeri et al (2020) suggest that an individual is in a state of well-being if they realize their abilities and have the ability to cope with the stresses of daily life, work productively and contribute to their communities. Spiritual practices enhance well-being and mental health through praying, meditating, contemplating and worshipping. In essence, all traditions commonly have a set of rituals, practices, principles and philosophies oriented to gain inner peace and guide people toward better relationships and well-being. All spiritual traditions attend to one of the main problems of humanity—dealing with uncertainty, and explaining the unexplainable.

Every spiritual discipline in human history has been created to account for the mysterious transcendence of the psyche. The works of spiritual leaders are narrative accounts for compelling testimonies of developmental transformations, of unpredictable and unprecedented psychological processes, woven together by agonies and ecstasies. It is not by chance that spirituality is connected with the deepest of human emotions: facing one's most dreaded fears, dealing with profound loss, or being transported by boundless joy (Fogel, 2000, p. xi).

There is a deep connection between psychology and spirituality. In particular, emotions rise at the core of both since they are grounded in the matrix of the mind-body interactions affecting and being affected dynamically by every operation of the psyche. The mind transforms the body and its emotions, equally the body and its emotions may transform the mind's perspective.

Stress, Emotions and Health. Historically, the literature on psychological stress and emotions have generally been treated as separate and distinct. Social and biological scientists interested

in emotions are often unaware of relevant stress literature, and vice versa (Lazarus, 2000). Walter Cannon from Harvard Medical School was the pioneer of stress research; his work dates back to 1914. By the 1930s, Cannon documented the 'emergency reaction' constituted by the physiological changes associated with the fight-or-flight response (Jacobs, 2001). 'This response is characterized by increased sympathetic nervous system activity, increased central nervous system arousal, and increased skeletal-muscle activity' (Jacobs, 2001, p.84). Later in the 1950s, the Swiss physiologist, Walter Hess, documented an opposite response; he hypothesized that the parasympathetic response was a protective mechanism against over stress that promotes restorative processes (Hess, 1957). In the 1970s, Dr. Herbert Benson from Harvard Medical School drew heavily on Hess's work and proposed the term relaxation response. Benson hypothesized that the relaxation response is mediated in the hypothalamus and is an inborn counterbalancing mechanism to the stress response (Jacobs, 2001). Stress has been linked to various problems, including insomnia (Morin, 1993) and negative emotions, such as hostility, anxiety, and even depression (LeDoux, 1996). The relaxation response, on the other hand, has been shown to be effective in treating many health problems, including insomnia, hostility, stress and anxiety (Benson, 1996). For example, autogenic training provides evidence that it is possible to regulate emotions through mind-body interactions (Jacobs, 2001). In autogenic training, patients learn to self-induce relaxation by auto-suggesting phrases of warmth and heaviness in the body (Schultz & Luthe, 1959). Health and emotions are interconnected. The human body reacts to complex life challenges and events such as diseases (Selye, 1976). It is a paradox that the fight-or-flight reaction, which aided in our evolutionary development, can now actually harm the central nervous system, the peripheral nervous system, and the immune system (Jacobs, 2001). When there is excessive activation of the fight-or-flight response—and there is no way to defend oneself from or escape from contemporary stressors—it can aggravate several health issues (Jacobs, 2001). However, there is proof that the relaxation response can assist people in regulating their emotions to effectively deal with stress and anxiety. Research on the physiology of mind-body interactions, stress and relaxation responses, demonstrates the effect of thoughts, beliefs, emotions and expectations on the body and health (Jacobs, 2001; Beecher, 1955).

2.2. Emotional Theories

Emotions originate in both (1) the intimate processes of the individual mind-body and (2) the structural coupling (Maturana & Varela, 1972) of the mind-body with the environment. This section discusses selected emotional theories relevant for explaining emotional and spiritual well-being from the individual, social and cultural perspective, and a theory that helps interpret and explain emotions as a system.

Appraisal and Social Appraisal Theory. This theory comes from psychology and social psychology. According to appraisal theory, each distinct emotion is elicited and configured by a distinctive pattern of appraisal. The main proposition of this theory is that the interpretation of events—rather than events themselves—causes emotions. Emotions are influenced by the appraisals of motive-incongruence, importance, agency, situational control, and problem-solving efficacy (Lazarus, 2000). In Fridja's (1988) theory of emotions, an emotion is a change in readiness for action, which is motivated by our appraisal of an event or situation regarding our wellbeing. Lazarus' theory of stress states that stress is experienced when a person perceives that the demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual can mobilize. Coping strategies suggest reappraisal processes of both the experienced emotion and the judgments of the events or the troubled relationship with the environment. In other words, coping is the process of seeking the most serviceable meaning available in an encounter and acting on it. It involves supporting realistic actions (problem focused-coping) while also

permitting the person to view the encounter in the most favorable way possible (emotion-focused coping).

Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions (Fredrickson, 2001). This theory underscores how positive emotions are essential elements of optimal functioning and therefore an essential topic within the science of well-being (Diener, 1991; Fredrickson (2001); Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The theory suggests that positive emotions: (i) broaden people's attention and thinking; (ii) undo lingering negative emotional arousal; (iii) fuel psychological resilience; (iv) build consequential personal resources; (v) trigger upward spirals towards greater well-being in the future; and (vi) seed human flourishing. The theory proposes that people should cultivate positive emotions in their own lives and the lives of those around them, not just because doing so makes them feel good at the moment but also because doing so transforms people for the better and sets them on a path towards flourishing and healthy longevity (Fredrickson, 2001).

Differential Emotions Theory (Izard, 1972). A core principle of differential emotions theory is that emotions operate as systems. Emotions are a constitutive feature of all living systems and fundamental to their evolutionary adaptation. An emotion is a complex system that emerges from interactions of constituent neurohormonal, motoric, and experiential processes (Izard, et al., 2000). Discrete emotions co-assemble with others to form contingent emotion patterns that stabilize over repetitions and time. Emotions constitute a complex adaptive system where the parts that make them are systems in their own right (Dimitrov, 2003). The systems are self-organizing in the sense that recursive interactions among component processes generate emergent properties (Izard et al., 2000). Table 1 summarizes the considered emotional theories, their main assumptions and propositions.

Table 1.

Summary of the Emotion Theories, Assumptions and Propositions

Theory	Assumptions	Propositions
Differential Emotions Theory builds from Systems Theory and Living Systems Theory.	Each emotion system and their interrelations with the cognitive system derive from four core processes: a) recursion among system elements, b) emergence of unique forms and patterns, c) consolidation of the forms over repetition and time, and d) constraints on system formation. Living systems are self-organized, self-referenced, and self-produced systems. They operate in a circular manner with hierarchy on their components configurations. Parts of the system constitute a system on their own (e.g. a cell or an organ is a subsystem of the body). Components may not be reduced to the whole, since they have their own independent operational coherences and consequences.	Emotions operate as systems. Recursion describes reciprocal interactions among the elements of a system in the form of negative or positive feedback that affect the element interactions. Emergence concerns the generation of affective-cognitive structures from nonlinear recursive cycles. Emergent forms and patterns represent "Attractors" for the emotional system as a whole.
Appraisal and Social Appraisal Theory	Emotions are influenced by the appraisals of motive-incongruence, importance, agency, situational control, and problem- solving efficacy. Each distinct emotion is elicited and configured by a distinctive pattern of appraisal. Emotions are cognitions.	The interpretation of events rather than the events themselves causes emotions.
The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions.	The main underlying assumption is that love within safe, close relationships sparks the urge for recurring cycles of joy, play, interest and exploration.	Positive emotions broaden an individual's momentary thought-action repertoires.

Theory	Assumptions	Propositions
	Joy, interest / curiosity, contentment and love broaden an individual's momentary thought–action repertoire: joy sparks the urge to play, interest sparks the urge to explore, contentment sparks the urge to savor and integrate, and love sparks a recurring cycle of each of these urges within safe, close relationships.	Positive emotions promote the discovery of novel and creative actions, ideas and social bonds, which in turn build that individual's personal resources; ranging from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources.

Theoretical Integration. The following integrated framework emphasizes the complex interplay between biological, individual, social, and cultural factors in the experience of emotional and spiritual well-being. It highlights the importance of understanding how people appraise and respond to stressful events and how positive emotions can play a role in building resilience and promoting well-being. The following are the key tenets of the integrated framework:

1. Individual and cultural factors influence appraisal processes. Individuals appraise events based on their experiences, values, goals, cultural norms and expectations.
2. Social appraisal processes are particularly relevant in stressful situations where social comparison and evaluation are salient. For example, people may feel stressed if they perceive that they are not meeting the expectations of others or if they perceive that others are coping better than they are.
3. Emotions are evolved responses that serve adaptive functions, such as preparing us to respond to threats or opportunities. Stressful events can trigger various intense emotions, including fear, anger, sadness, and anxiety.
4. The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions suggests that positive emotions, such as gratitude, joy, and awe, can help counteract stress's adverse effects. Positive emotions broaden our attention and cognitive processes which can help build our resources and resilience over time.

The adaptive nature of emotions suggests that all emotions are equally adequate, each one is useful to navigate specific situations by enabling thought and body disposition for action. From an evolutionary perspective, each distinct emotion allows us to focus and perform specific actions and behaviors that will preserve our well-being and increase our possibilities of survival. Peace is not particularly an emotion, it is rather a state of mind where we can accept and able to act coherently with the circumstances. Peace is a fundamental state of being and the foundation for building emotional resources, therefore, personal and social resilience. Notably, the lack of peace occurs when we tolerate, avoid, resist or neglect circumstances, relationships or events that require our attention and otherwise might affect us. Avoidance, alienation, isolation, and uncertainty from life's circumstances may lead to the propensity of experiencing stress and disruptive emotions. Inadequate responses to high-stress situations and proneness to negative emotionality contribute to the repetition and consolidation of maladaptive emotion-cognition-action sequences (Izard et al., 2000). 'Emotional agility is the ability to be flexible with one's emotions and thoughts in the face of changing situational demands' (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010, p. 1). It involves being able to identify and accept one's emotions while acting in line with one's values and goals. Stress and emotional agility have biological, personal, social, and cultural structural causes. Both phenomena can be explained and measured by understanding emotional systems and how biology, social appraisals, beliefs, values and culture influence the configuration of thought patterns that operate in our bodies, affecting our well-being.

2.3. Key Concepts

This section presents key concepts to analyze, explain and evaluate REP.

Awareness. ‘Is a heightened and flexible attentiveness to perceptual impressions in one’s environment, as well as internal cues, such as bodily sensations, thoughts, and emotions. States of heightened awareness are thus typified by being fully aware of what one is doing, whom one is with, and of one’s internal states, whereas diminished levels of awareness entail being distracted or absorbed in a given activity or situation.’ (Dahl et al., 2020, p.32198).

Connection. ‘Refers to a subjective sense of care and kinship toward other people that promotes supportive relationships and caring interactions. This may occur through positive social perceptions, such as gratitude and appreciation, as well as perspectives of shared humanity toward those outside of one’s immediate social circles.’ (Dahl et al., 2020, p.32198).

Flourishing. The ten dimensions of high well-being or flourishing are: competence, emotional stability, engagement, meaning, optimism, positive emotion, positive relationships, resilience, self-esteem, and vitality (Ruggeri et al., 2020).

Insight. ‘Refers to self-knowledge concerning how emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and other factors are shaping one’s subjective experience and especially one’s sense of self. States of insight thus reflect an experiential understanding of one’s own psychological processes and how the dynamic interplay of these processes influences experience.’ (Dahl et al., 2020, p.32198).

Integrity. Ferry (2018) suggests that integrity is fundamental for agency and self-reliance. Integrity is the state of being whole and complete; undivided, integrated, intact, and uncorrupted. Integrity is a pragmatic notion that inspires people with the opportunity to harvest their full potential. Suffering, sadness, agitation, frustration and all other negative emotions indicate that people lack integrity in their life.

Purpose. ‘Refers to a sense of clarity concerning personally meaningful aims and values that one is able to apply in daily life. Heightened states of purpose thus foster the self-perception that one has both aims and values and is also able to embody them. This self-perception, in turn, leads one to perceive meaning and significance in one’s life and pursuits. States of diminished purpose may involve a lack of clarity concerning one’s aims and values, or the perception that one has clear values and aims yet is unable to embody them.’ (Dahl et al., 2020, p.32198).

Self-reliance. The idea that one can rely on his or her own judgment, choices, and be free from these societal influences is to be self-reliant. According to Jung, the constituents of self-reliance include: awareness, inner faith, self-worth, humility, patience, acceptance, and self-confidence. Jung suggested that the absence of any one of these can cause a breakdown in a person's belief system and lead to a spiritual crisis (Seaward, 1989).

2.4. The Rapid Enlightenment Process (REP)

Through a lifetime of self-contemplative inquiry, personal experiences, and a thirty-year experience in the practice of human development, coaching and training of business leaders, Matthew Ferry (2018) assembled REP — a framework designed to increase psychological resources not only to cope with modern life and the uneasiness, fuzziness, hardship and stress of competitive environments, but to transform an individual's life into a creative, resourceful, joyful and peaceful one. The premise of Ferry’s work is the mismatch he observes between the world we are living today and an incongruent “survival mindset”. He argues that nowadays, millions of people (especially those in first and second-world countries) have the conditions

and access to resources, technologies, and enough wealth to thrive and to transform the dominant scarcity mindset into a peaceful, loving, and generous mindset that could rapidly transform our way of life. And when the notion of a “survival mind” becomes the psycho-social foundation of human relationships, its usually leads to uneasiness, conflict, and unsatisfactory outcomes. Ferry defines the REP as:

“A series of contextual shifts that transforms cultural conditioning, limiting and unexamined beliefs and replaces them with new enlightened perspectives. Through the process participants are able to recontextualize the fundamental questions about the meaning of life and their role in it, while striving to create the most empowering context possible. The REP exposes participants to a new set of contexts that naturally cause them to move away from survival mind and limiting beliefs into acceptance, peace and joy” (Ferry, 2018, p.43).

Ferry (2018) proposes a recontextualization (Tomson, 1994) process to overcome the “survival mind”. In hermeneutics, recontextualization is the process of placing something in a new context or environment in order to change its meaning. Restraining thoughts and ideas founded on survival can be transformed into a non-dualistic, non-violent narrative that brings forward acceptance and peace. Since the “survival mind” builds from the past and anticipates the future. By deliberately changing the perspective, the mind can shift from a suffering past-future orientation into a mind that is fully at the present, nurtured with deep acceptance. Through the REP, participants are invited to transform their narrative and reflect to set an intention that actively frees their mind from the survival alienation. This detachment not only puts an end to the causes of self-conflict and suffering but also clarifies and allows self-acceptance, self-liberation, forgiveness and peace, therefore, a reconstitution of spontaneous well-being (Maturana, 1996).

Since human beings are historical, social, emotional, and relational creatures; the individual recontextualization process is doomed to fail due to social environments ruled by conflicted networks of conversations and the contagious nature of social emotions. To transcend this condition, Ferry proposes the adoption and embodiment of what he describes as *Enlightened Perspectives* (EP): an update on a collection of ideas, heuristics and beliefs that have been used in classic spiritual and contemplative inquiry traditions such as Christianity, Buddhism and Stoic Philosophy.

Table 2 presents the contents of REP.

Table 2.
Contents of the Rapid Enlightenment Process at Glance

Individual Practice	Delivery Mechanism	Enlightened response-based skills	Outcome
Learning the Survival Mind framework	Readings, podcasts, videos and lectures	Unconditional acceptance & curiosity	Self- awareness
Reflecting on the inner voice	Coaching	Identifying thought patterns & fundamental misconceptions about self	Insights
Social support and connectedness	9-month weekly reflecting group	Collaboration to challenge misperceptions and maladaptive behaviors (i.e. resistance)	Self-reliance
Practicing recontextualization	3 Day Seminar	Recontextualization	Expansion of the sense of belonging
Reconstitution of Wellbeing	Self-reflection Guided Meditations	Affirmations of Enlightened Perspectives	Connection / Inspiration
Achieving Agency and Self liberation	1 Day Seminar	Setting Intentions	Purpose
Individual Practice Principles and Commitments			
Be responsible for your inner conversation			
Be accountable for your behavior			
Use the virtue framework to transform yourself			
Participate in the support group			
Attend one of the 3-day seminars			
Sustain your progress by changing your narrative using new perspectives			

Author (2023)

3. Results

3.1. Summary of the REP Using the Template for Intervention Description and Replication Checklist by Hoffmann et al. (2014)

1. Brief Name: Provide the name or a phrase that describes the intervention. The intervention, entitled Rapid Enlightenment Process (REP), aims to build individual psychological resources by acknowledging the role of positive emotions and the practice of recontextualization to cope with the stress of modern life and sustain peace, joy, and well-being.

2. Why: Describe any rationale, theory, or goal of the elements essential to the intervention. The REP is a didactic, dynamic, skill-based perspective on well-being intervention based on intentional mental training. Research indicates that psychological well-being can be cultivated through intentional mental training (Dahl et al. 2020). The practice of REP leads to adaptive coping skills such as reflexive and appreciative coping (Sanchez King & Dahal, 2021) and helps emotional regulation processes. The recontextualization process and the daily practices suggested by Ferry such as appreciation, acceptance, gratitude, responsibility, kindness, celebration, and detachment seek to drive positive emotions and constructive behaviors. These practices are in alignment with both; the 'broaden and build theory of positive emotions' (Fredrickson, 2001); and the 'plasticity of well-being framework' (Dahl et al., 2020) to cultivate what is known as the 'relaxation response' (Hess, 1957).

3/4. What: Materials and procedures. The first encounter with REP occurs usually by reading a book, hearing a podcast or watching an online video. What is unique about REP is that participants deliberately subscribe to the intervention. When an intervention is adopted

internally, it may influence the success of implementation (Greenhalgh, et al., 2004). This prevents attrition and means that participants' commitment is in place as a fundamental part of the process. The REP consists of individual learning and practice over nine months—precisely 39 consecutive weeks— with at least 32 biweekly online group-based sessions. The online video call sessions aim to immerse participants in the REP framework. Sessions start with participants setting their intentions to raise self-awareness, then continue to actively explore thought patterns, set personal goals, and share insights. All participants are requested to sign a non-disclosure agreement to protect their privacy. During the sessions, trained mentors and experts on REP facilitate and teach how to transform survival thought patterns using intentional recontextualization. Recontextualization and acceptance of the disruption of the survival mind bring a new awareness. Each session is designed to nurture the following skills:

- **Mindful Awareness:** nonjudgmental awareness and acceptance of present thoughts, feelings, and experiences; this awareness allows practitioners to focus on the present moment and restore peace with life circumstances
- **Emotion Regulation:** increasing awareness and understanding of negative emotions while being able to transform them into positive emotions
- **Interpersonal Effectiveness:** accepting all humans as they are and utilizing effective interpersonal interactions with the intention of self-liberation, self-acceptance and better relationships
- **Connection, Purpose and Inspiration:** setting an intention to raise awareness, and developing goal-setting abilities from an enlightened perspective — transforming material goals into spiritual goals as means to establishing peace as a starting point to accomplish meaningful and inspiring goals
- **Distress Tolerance:** managing difficult-to-change situations without resistance and worsening the situation.

Adults participate in group exercises and review experiences, share insights and learn more skillful behaviors to cope with life. Each skills session lasts about an hour and follows the format of a workshop guided by mentors and complemented practice groups. Practitioners are asked to share examples of effective skill-use they have observed, then practices are suggested by the facilitators to enhance their learning. These suggested and voluntary daily practices may last between ten to twenty minutes each. For example, a mindfulness activity through recorded meditations, a brief lesson to introduce a specific REP skill, self-assessment and an experimental activity to practice the skill during the week. Lessons are supplemented by homework assignment for the next session, and at least one in person, face-to-face group seminars or retreats where all attendees participate in self-assessments, mindfulness exercises, goal setting techniques, and optional team-work, using interpersonal effectiveness skills. The retreat is also set to create a community and networking with like-minded individuals. The retreat session concludes with clarifying personal goals.

5. Who Provides: Describe the expertise, background, and specific training given to each category of intervention provider. A facilitator leads the didactic, mindfulness, and experiential activities (e.g. muscle testing demonstrations), while a co-facilitator helps manage in-session behaviors and models participation. The facilitators hold the space for the practitioners, meaning that practitioners are able to access new sensibilities given the emotional resources and experience shared by the facilitators who are trained in the practice of coaching, neuro-linguistic programming, cognitive behavioral therapy and have sufficient experience on REP so that they could mentor it.

6. How: Describe the modes of delivery of the intervention. The intervention is supported by books, video, podcast and delivered through online group sessions using Zoom video conference software, one to three days face-to-face seminar retreat, and occasional personal online mentoring and coaching sessions if and when requested by the practitioner. During the in-person one-day seminar, the main facilitator performs a demonstration of muscle testing kinesiology so that the participants experience Ferry's Enlightened Perspectives first hand (see Table 5, p.24).

7. Where: Describe the type(s) of location(s) where the intervention may occur. The REP is delivered online in practitioners' homes or offices. Retreats occur in any private space, usually a hotel or convention center with adequate chairs, tables, and audiovisual equipment. The intervention was developed to train adults to recontextualize beliefs, therefore, it is held in a safe and confidential space.

3.2. Detailed Description of REP

Components of REP Treatment. According Ferry, the REP framework has four main components: 1) The understanding of the survival mind (Learning the 12 Unconscious Reflexes and the 10 Hidden Motives to Survive); 2) Self-acceptance, acceptance of other people and the new awareness; 3) The practice of recontextualization: understanding how to intentionally create a new context as a way to transform disruptive negative emotions into positive emotions; and 4) The adoption of what is identified in this paper as the "Enlightened Perspectives", a series of ideas that will sustain and increase the experience of peace, joy and happiness until it becomes a habit and a self-protective factor or psychological resource.

Understanding the Survival Mind. The Survival mind is constituted by the identification of *Twelve Unconscious Reflexes* (Ferry, 2018). These reflexes operate as maladaptive strategies. They can be observed through attitudes and behaviors that diminish people's relationship with Self, others, and the circumstances. These reactive patterns cause disruption and undesired outcomes, such as the propensity to experience negative emotions, dissatisfaction and frustration. To change these patterns, participants need to understand the root of their behavior founded on *Ten Hidden Motives to Survive* (Ferry, 2018). The ten motives may trigger a ruminating state of mind that might overwhelm people's attention, and distract them from a meaningful life. Table 3 presents the twelve maladaptive strategies proposed by Ferry (2018) and Table 4 presents the Ten Hidden Motives to Survive.

Table 3.

Twelve Maladaptive Strategies of the Survival Mind

	12 Unconscious Reflexes	Description
1	Forecasting the Negative	Negative anticipation of the future or lack of trust in the future
2	The Desire to Fit In	From a survival standpoint, it is critical to learn how to be a part of a social group. By forming complex social groups working together, our species has created a successful structure for survival
3	Holding others accountable to agreements they never made	Expectations that others will fulfill our wishes without expressing them
4	Avoiding Making the Same Mistake Twice	Creating generalizations about how unwanted outcomes will repeat. Creating connections between things that aren't related and then using that connection to describe a potential negative outcome. Unwilling to try new things.
5	Following Rules That Don't Exist	Unconsciously following rules that degrade you. Believing that these rules are appropriate, important, or valuable even though, with examination, they aren't real and they make your life worse

12 Unconscious Reflexes		Description
6	Avoiding Failure	Rather than taking a risk you stick to what is known. Your creativity and optimism is diminished by a lack of curiosity. This is a combination of maladaptive strategies: Forecasting the future. Avoiding making the same mistake. Avoiding embarrassment.
7	Avoiding Embarrassment	As a social animal we overemphasize the stories we have about ourselves and what others think about us. We would rather have good standing than authenticity or personal integrity.
8	Protecting from the Unknown	This is a variation on avoiding failure. We say no before we have any information. We make up stories about the future rather than being curious and investigating.
9	Illogical Opinions on Things you know nothing about with no Basis In Reality	This appears to be a combination of laziness and pride. We are lazy and invent uninformed perspectives to sound important or avoid having to do the work to discover the truth. We use this to protect ourselves from the unknown by creating stories that give us an excuse not to engage.
10	To Be Right	Defaulting into being right about things as a way of protecting our pride and our position. This is an aspect of pride and grudge and illogical rules.
11	To Be Better Than Other People	We are driven to compare ourselves and try to make a case for why we are better. This is driven by feeling like a victim and feeling less than others.
12	To Prove Worthiness	We are social animals. Our connection and collaboration with others has been essential to our survival. Demonstrating value is triggered by The Victim Hidden Motive which tells us we are not worthy.

Source: Ferry (2018)

Table 4.
Ten Hidden Motives to Survive

Motive	Description
1 Pride	Often experienced as arrogance. Trying to be more important and prove you are above others. Overly attached to being right about things. Trying to look smarter than others. The quality of having an excessively high opinion of oneself or one's importance.
2 Greed	The fear that there won't be enough opportunity, time, money, food, or resources. The intense and selfish desire for something for fear of not having enough.
3 Victim	Feeling powerless as if life is out of your control
4 Illogical Rules	Unconsciously following rules that degrade you. Believing that these rules are appropriate, important, or valuable even though, with examination, they aren't real and they make your life worse
5 Humble	Having or showing a modest or low estimate of one's own importance. Making yourself less than.
6 Traitor	Hiding your true feelings or thoughts for fear of losing a benefit.
7 Lazy	Avoiding hard things in an effort to keep a benefit. Avoiding activity or exertion: not energetic or vigorous.
8 Resistance	Pushing against ideas, activities, and people in an effort to protect against the loss of a benefit. The fear of a negative future.
9 Hatred	Intense dislike or ill will. Fear of differences. Broken expectations that turn into anger.
10 Grudge	Holding onto a persistent feeling of ill will or resentment to make sure bad things won't happen.

Source: Ferry (2018)

According to Ferry (2018) the survival mind gets activated when people face a real or imagined threat configured as a challenge, loss of opportunity or a lack, that they believe might harm

them or the people or things they care about. From a physiological perspective, the sympathetic system is activated, meaning that an individual feels threatened and operate in a flight or fight response. Rumination in the form of anticipating negative consequences or self-criticism takes over generating unwanted emotions and thoughts. To ease the mind, practitioners must restore their integrity. Restoring integrity means being whole, complete, functional and workable, in life with quality thoughts, activities and relationships. When people restore integrity, they have the personal power to take responsibility rather than blame the circumstances or others (Ferry, 2018).

Acceptance of the New Awareness. Acceptance of the new awareness involves total and complete acceptance of all people, in all situations, and at all times. It entails honoring the perfection of all imperfection, accepting people and situations exactly as they are but not tolerating being harmed or degraded. Acceptance cultivates non-judgmentally and acceptance of present thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

The Practice of Recontextualization. Recontextualization involves taking something out of its original context and placing it in a new one, or adding new elements to its context that change how it is understood. Recontextualization involves looking at things differently and considering new empowering perspectives. When people recontextualize their life, they are changing the context or environment in which they understand their experiences; this can alter their meaning and significance.

The Adoption of Enlightened Perspectives (EP). According to Ferry (2018), practicing the adoption of enlightened perspectives will help people to transcend the insanity of the survival mind and achieve what is traditionally called *enlightenment*. Ferry argues that enlightenment is not a religion but a contextual framework that expands the boundaries of traditional spiritual practices to propose an array of updated and new perspectives founded on an intuitive and consensual muscle testing protocol that is helpful to transcend restraining and weakening beliefs that interfere with human flourishing. The recursive practice of the process seeks to create sustained moments of self-awareness.

Enlightenment is the recognition that the source of life within you is also the source of life in everyone and everything else. We are all one thing expressing itself with infinite variety. At the core of enlightenment is the ability to accept what you see without unwanted emotion or reaction. The more you accept, the less you resist is easier it is to think, express, and create the life you want (Ferry, 2018, pp. 32-33).

Table 5.
Enlightened Perspectives

Perspective	Origin / Influence	Applied Kinesiology Test
People have lived multiple human lifetimes	Hindu / Buddhism tradition	Strong
They have only lived one lifetime	Hindu / Buddhism tradition	Weak
When the people die, that is the end of their existence	Hindu / Buddhism tradition	Weak
People are a soul	Catholic tradition	Strong
People are not a soul	Catholic tradition	Weak
The soul is infinite	New Thought / Buddhism tradition	Strong
People choose to incarnate as a human being	New Thought	Strong
Being a human is random	New Thought	Weak
Incarnating as a human being is like taking a vacation for your soul	Matthew Ferry	Strong
The purpose of life is to learn lessons	New Thought	Weak
The purpose of life is to experience.	Matthew Ferry	Strong

Perspective	Origin / Influence	Applied Kinesiology Test
Positive and negative experiences are equally valuable to the soul	Matthew Ferry	Strong
You choose your geographic location before you incarnate as a human being	Matthew Ferry	Strong
You choose your parents before you are born	New Thought	Strong
You are born in a random place and to a random family	New Thought	Weak
You have incarnated as a human with your current parents, friends, enemies and family members in many lifetimes	New Thought	Strong
The people in your life are present out of randomness	New Thought	Weak
You choose the major negative experiences of your life before you incarnate on earth	New Thought	Strong
The major negative experiences of your life are completely random and not predetermined	Matthew Ferry	Weak
Your life is predetermined	Determinism / Free Will	Weak
You (the soul) set up a few conditions of your life, in advance and rejoice in the unpredictability it creates	New Thought	Strong

Source: Ferry (2018)

Table 5 Presents examples of the enlightened perspectives commonly used in REP. Figure 1 presents a model of REP's components.

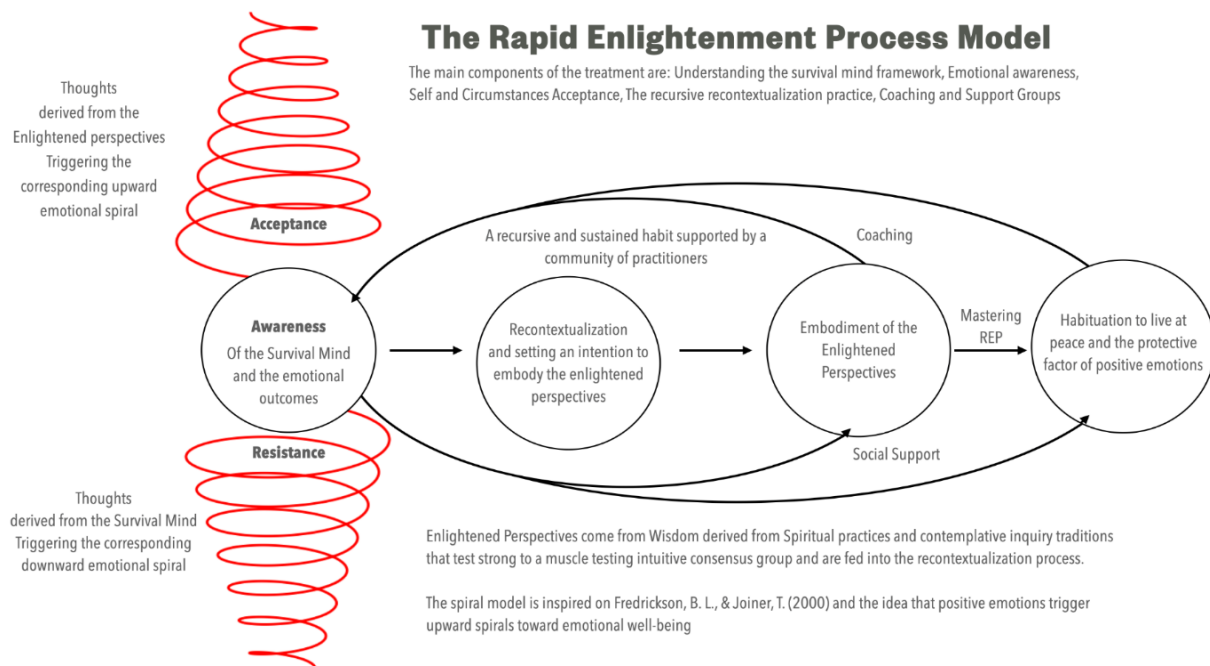


Figure 1. The Rapid Enlightenment Process Model (Inspired by Fredrickson's model of upward spirals toward emotional well-being)

Source: Author (2023)

3.3. REP's Assumptions and Propositions

Assumption 1. Humans are historical, relational, emotional and social beings (Maturana et al. 2008). Our constitutive nature operates as a complex unity of body, language, emotions and the environment. To make sense of the world we use language. To guide ourselves and navigate the world we sense and interpret emotions. Human emotions can be seen as complex adaptive systems (Izard et al. 2000).

Proposition 1. Culturalization, social beliefs and low self-esteem might lead to self-assumptions, self-judgments, self-expectations and self-demands (Maturana et al 2008) that are internalized as a dogmatic inner narrative that can stand in the way of well-being and a peaceful mind. Resistance and avoidance to life's experiences lead to suffering, distorted and overextended emotions. Accepting life's experiences without resistance and distortions is the path for well-being and inner peace.

Proposition 2. Thoughts may contain distortions and exaggeration that lead to unpleasantness and disruptive emotions (Chand et al., 2022). By adopting a new context and changing the inner narratives people can guide their thought process into useful dogma to transform themselves. REP narratives, e.g. the Enlightened Perspectives are non-violent by nature. They expand the sense of belonging by addressing a non-dual perspective that leads to suspending self-expectations, self-judgements, self-assumptions and self-demands.

Proposition 3. Accessing self body responses through muscle testing kinesiology, is a way of triangulating and integrating cognition, emotion and body. This integration nurtures and develops personal intuition. All EPs come from this intuitive process. EPs have no logic or rationality, they may not be proven as true, but neither as false. Given the transcendent nature of the EPs there are no scientific means to prove them or dispute them, all are propositions subject to subjective interpretations. The main goal of the EPs is not to sustain them as a fact. But to support people in a creative and meaningful way, regardless of their objectivity.

Proposition 4. People engage and support themselves through community participation, both aspects enable the conservation of new narratives that create sustained change. When people experience well-being after adopting a new narrative, they are naturally attracted to conserve the narrative and willing to be together and explore the adoption of new behaviors and narratives in the future. Figure 2 presents a logic model for the REP.

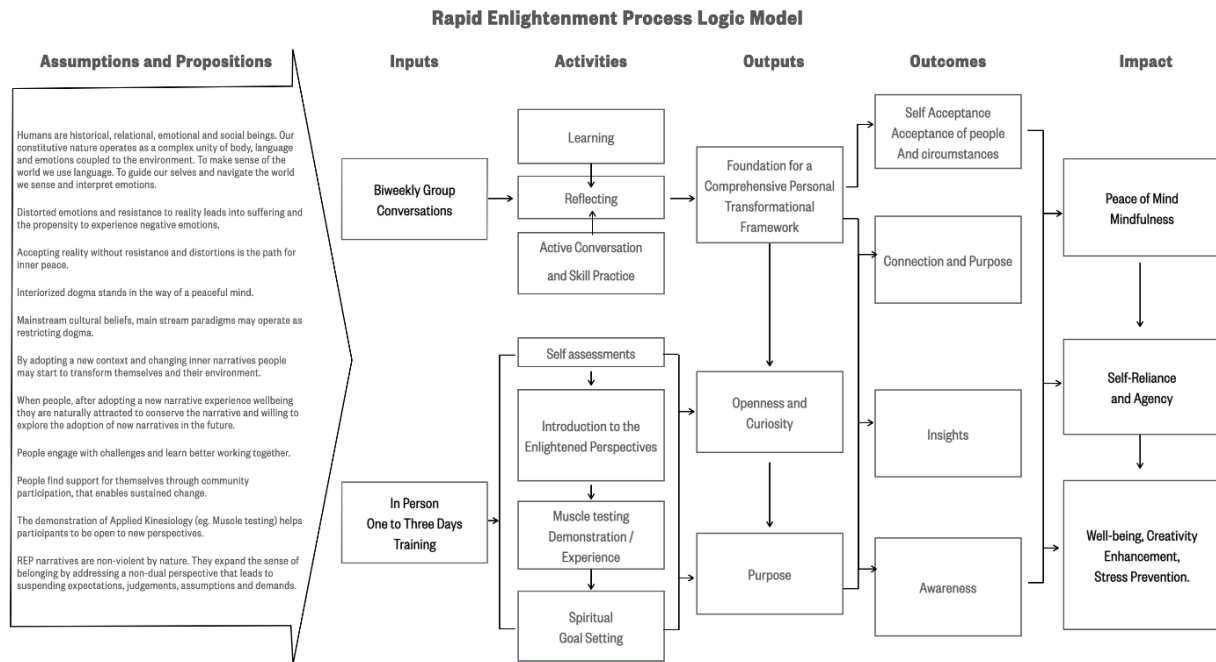


Figure 2. The Rapid Enlightenment Process Logic Model
Source: Author (2023)

4. Discussion

The paradoxical and chaotic nature of social reality (eg. a fear driven economy catalyzed by marketing and media) causes a great deal of uncertainty (Dimitrov, 2003) which can paralyze decision-making and action causing stress. Perceived stress may be triggered in an individual's mind due to a lack of trust in the future and due to negative anticipations originated in unsatisfactory and even traumatic experiences from the past. Cognitive behavioral interventions are based on the observation that dysfunctional automatic thoughts can be exaggerated, distorted, mistaken, or unrealistic (Chand et al., 2022). Most of the time uneasiness and stress are caused more by the way we think about a situation than by the situation itself (Lazarus, 2000). The merit of REP is that it teaches practitioners how to become aware of negative thoughts rooted on a specific and detailed framework that explains maladaptive mechanisms, and promotes acceptance and self-reliance. It allows, encourages and supports participants on how to challenge unwanted, reactive thoughts through the practice of recontextualization and the embodiment of new perspectives. The REP's perspectives ultimately operate as heuristics – an approach to problem-solving or self-discovery that employs a practical method that is not guaranteed to be rational, optimal, perfect, but is nevertheless sufficient for reaching an immediate, short-term goal or approximation (Khan & Mir, 2021). Individual's self-reliance helps shift the negative cycle of thoughts and self-generate positive emotional states. This practice is also known as the science of interpretation or hermeneutics. Ferry (2018) argues that REP's perspectives are useful dogma that empowers and strengthens people's will and sense of awe, an affinity between hermeneutics and pragmatism. Rorty proposes that hermeneutics is not necessarily a linguistic construction, rather is an edification:

The attempt to edify (ourselves and others) may consist in the hermeneutic activity of making connections between our own culture and some exotic culture, between our own discipline and another discipline which seems to pursue incommensurable aims in an incommensurable vocabulary. Hermeneutics consist in the poetic activity of thinking up new aims, new words, or new disciplines, followed by, so to speak, the reverse

hermeneutics: the attempt to reinterpret our familiar surroundings with unfamiliar terms of our new inventions (Shapiro, 1984, p.4).

According to Ferry (2018) recontextualization and the embodiment of the Enlightened Perspectives (EP) are the main active ingredients in REP. When practitioners understand the survival mind as the origin thought patterns with a propensity toward negative emotions, they deliberately are able to recontextualize their fragmented afflictive states to restore what Ferry (2018) conceives as integrity; a state of being whole and complete to harvest people's full potential. Evidence from randomized trials suggests to imagine the *Best Possible Self* is an exercise that has positive effects in happiness, life satisfaction, increasing optimism, and possibly improved health (King, 2001; Boehm et al., 2011; Layous et al., 2013; Peters et al., 2013). Self-induced well-being is one the REP's main recursive practices. Practitioners are encouraged to integrate their psyche through hermeneutics to ease their mind free from the distractions and rumination originated in the emergency reaction (Cannon, 1932). REP's hermeneutics operate through mind-body interactions and restore a peaceful state of being that might enable the relaxation response. Mind-body interactions acknowledge the influence of the mind in relationship to health and well-being. Research suggests that it is possible to control mind-body interactions to some extent self-induced well-being (Jacobsen, 1938; Schultz & Luthe, 1959).

REP's coaching perspective is highly focused on nurturing self-reliance. Coaching from a systems perspective is an adaptive conversation (Cavanagh, 2006) that enables shifts on thoughts, emotions and actions. Emotional systems can incorporate complex positive and negative feedback loops, and feed forward loops that impact on the emergence of behavior (Lewin, 1993). Unhelpful behaviors, maladaptive strategies, are unintentional consequences that emerge as the result of system dynamics, such as the survival mind and the twelve reflexes described by Ferry. To avoid negative recursive feedback loops in the emotional system. REP is focused on the alignment of the contradictions between wanted and unwanted outcomes by clarifying participants' goals, bringing their mind to the present moment, abstaining it from an overactive past and future orientation. The REP practice acknowledges the negative feedback loops and nurtures positive feedback loops aligning them with participants' sense of purpose. According to Dahl et al. (2020) 'purpose is an important component of influential scientific models of well-being and is central to perspectives of human flourishing in the world's contemplative and humanistic traditions. Purpose and meaning in life shape our personal narratives and are associated with a range of outcomes related to psychological well-being and physical health' (Dahl et al., 2020, p.32198). REP sessions are configured as a guided workshop where participants engage in conversations that lead to self-reflection. By reflecting they attain insights from their life experiences, set new intentions and goals, share their stories, and plan next steps in their inner and outer work. Participation in work has been shown to positively affect numerous health and well-being outcomes (VanderWeele, 2020). There is evidence that working improves life satisfaction, mental and physical health, and relationship satisfaction (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005; VanderWeele, 2017). The REP intervention has a strong social component where like-minded participants practice together. It can be observed that social support and deep human connection are present during the sequential 39 weeks period of the intervention. Furthermore, intimacy, regenerative conversations and reflection occur during the intervention. A significant body of literature acknowledges social support as a resource to cope with stress and its reduction (Sanchez & Dahal, 2021). Social support and human connection can strengthen an individual's position against a stressor and reduce the threat level (Lazarus, 2000). Connection refers to a subjective sense of care and kinship towards other people (Dahl et al., 2020). Several studies suggest that acts of kindness, helping others, not only increase others' well-being but also increase one's sense of well-being (VanderWeele,

2020). Self-acceptance, and meta-awareness are the most profound and relevant potential outcomes of REP. Dahl et al. (2020) argue that the ability to be aware and attentive has important implications for healthy psychological functioning. 'Attentional meditation and mindfulness interventions improve outcomes related to the self-regulation of emotion, including lower levels of stress, decreased subjective reactivity to pain, improvements in symptoms related to anxiety, depression, and other mental disorders, and increased positive emotions and overall psychological well-being' (Dahl et al., 2020 p.45–47).

5. Conclusions and Research Implications

In this article I presented, explained and analyzed REP from a multidisciplinary perspective; I supported its affirmations through the assimilation and combination of evidence in the form of previously developed research, concepts and theories (Hirschheim, 2008). Overall, the REP emphasizes the importance of self-reliance, reflection, context, connection and purpose as a means of sustaining emotional and spiritual well-being. REP is a dynamic, skill-based perspective and intentional training for well-being. REP principles and practices are designed to facilitate a change in narrative so that participants organize their psychological resources not only to cope with stress and anxiety but seek to flourish and self-nurture well-being. I reviewed and described the REP intervention in detail using the authors' procedures and the Intervention Description and Replication Checklist Template (Hoffmann et al., 2014). I provided a conceptual and theoretical framework to clarify the author's positionality, so that the intervention can be adequately understood, measured and evaluated by including key concepts and theories from the fields of biology, psychology and social psychology, positive psychology, living systems theory, along with the author's key concepts and influences from contemplative inquiry traditions. Finally, I presented a logic model that clarifies the claims and warrants of the intervention, describing REP's underlying assumptions and propositions, and proposed that the core dimensions of the plasticity of well-being framework as useful concepts to evaluate and measure REP's outcomes.

Many ancient spiritual traditions and philosophies had inspired the REP. The hermeneutics and the heuristics provided in Ferry's (2018) perspectives might be useful tools for restoring and sustaining well-being. REP may increase entrepreneurs' skills and perspectives to help them to cope with stress and build high levels of optimism and resilience. The REP has the potential to enable practitioners in business settings to shift from fearful and afflicted states, e.g., the emergency reaction, into peaceful and mindful states of being; e.g., the relaxation response, since intrinsically REP's values human well-being as a means to deal with the hostile alienation of scarcity and productivism. Ultimately, the REP practice leads to radical self-acceptance, acceptance of the other and acceptance of one's life circumstances. Acceptance expands our awareness and sense of belonging, enabling us to free ourselves from judgments, assumptions, expectations, and demands, therefore restore peace of mind and psychological well-being.

The concepts and theoretical frameworks presented in this paper are a comprehensive approach to evaluate REP and its impact on emotional and spiritual well-being. The origins of REP intervention come from the business environment and are not intended to be a clinical intervention, furthermore one important distinction of this intervention is that participants pay for the REP program. To help establish a foundation for the adaptation and potential diffusion of the REP intervention to broader populations and settings, qualitative and quantitative studies should be conducted. REP's design quality, complexity, adaptability, cost, evidence strength and relative advantage should be evaluated (Greenhalgh et al., 2004). I suggest that future research should be focused on 1) documenting the experiences of REP's practitioners seeking to understand how the recontextualization influence the experience of stress and wellbeing, and

2) the evaluation of REP, considering four underlying questions that should be answered: 1) Are there any changes on stress reduction, mental health, and life satisfaction after experiencing the REP intervention? If so, for how long can these changes be sustained? 2) How effective is the REP intervention in comparison to other interventions? 3) What is the feasibility and acceptability of REP when implemented in other populations and settings? 4) How can REP be adapted for broader audiences and replicated successfully, without losing fidelity?

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