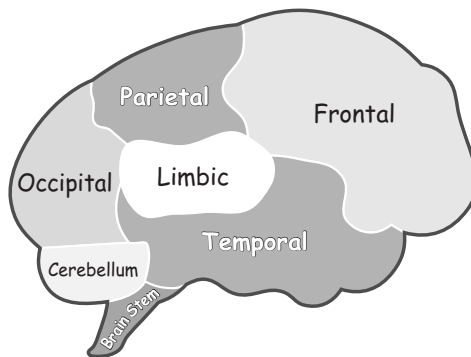


# Chapter 1

# The Psychological Mind

As we begin our journey across the Universe we need to have a basic understanding of what is inside our head and how it works. The human brain is complicated so we will look at a simplified version. It is easiest to consider the human brain as a system of seven brains working together.

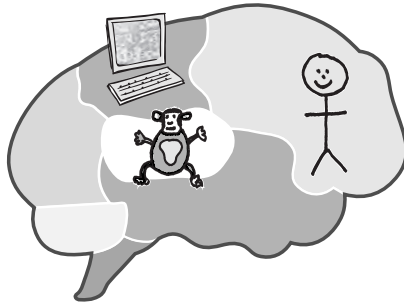


The human brain simplified

Within the Chimp Management model, three of these brains – frontal, limbic and parietal – combine to form the ‘Psychological Mind’ and we will only look at these brains. Remember that scientifically this is far from accurate but it will give us a working model. Strictly speaking, the other brains significantly contribute to emotions, thinking and memory but for our purposes we will dramatically simplify things.

The three psychological brains in our model, the frontal, limbic and parietal, are called the Human, the Chimp and the Computer. For convenience, we will let the parietal lobe represent many parts

of the brain, which makes our diagram more straightforward. Although these three brains try to work together, they very frequently get into conflict and struggle against each other to gain control, with the Chimp (limbic brain) often winning!



The Psychological Mind

## Introducing the Chimp

When you were in the womb two different brains, the frontal (Human) and limbic (Chimp: an emotional machine), developed independently and then introduced themselves to each other by forming connections. The problem is that they found they were not in agreement about most things. Either of these two brains, or beings, could run your life for you but they try to work together, and therein is the problem. The Human and Chimp have independent personalities with different agendas, ways of thinking, and modes of operating. Effectively there are two beings in your head! It is important to grasp that only one of these beings is you, the Human.

The Chimp is the emotional machine that we all possess. It thinks independently from us and can make decisions. It offers emotional thoughts and feelings that can be very constructive or very destructive; it is not good or bad, it is a Chimp. The Chimp Paradox is that it can be your best friend and your worst enemy, even at the same time. The main purpose of this book is to help you to manage your Chimp and to harness its strength and power when it is working for you and to neutralise it when it is not.

**Key Point**

*The Chimp is an emotional machine that thinks independently from us. It is not good or bad, it is just a Chimp.*

When people have accidents that damage their frontal lobe or where they have a disorder or illness affecting the frontal lobe, their personality alters. Effectively the Human part of the brain stops working and the new personality that presents is the Chimp. Very often, people affected in this way will become disinhibited and lose

**The case of Phineas Gage**

An early example that demonstrated there could be two different personalities in one head – represented by the Human and Chimp – was that of Phineas Gage. In the late nineteenth century, Gage was employed by a railway company to clear the way for the tracklayers by blowing away any boulders that were too big to move manually. To do this he packed explosives beneath the boulder and then tamped it down with a thick iron rod before lighting the fuse. Gage had been chosen to do this dangerous work because he was judged to be careful, sober and responsible. However, one time, Gage allowed himself to be distracted at a crucial moment and caused the rod to strike the boulder, which created a spark. The resulting explosion jettisoned the iron bar into Gage's eye socket, through the front of his head and out the top of his skull. As it exited, it took with it a clean core of brain tissue from his frontal (Human) lobe.

Apart from being blind in one eye, Gage made a full recovery. However, his personality was completely altered. He became foul-mouthed, aggressive and impulsive. Effectively, his Human had gone and he was now left with just the Chimp!

their judgement or they can become apathetic or have outbursts of aggressive behaviour.

You can recognise the difference between your Chimp thinking and Human thinking without knowing any of the science. How many times have you talked to yourself, reassured yourself or had battles within your own head? Often you have thoughts and feelings that you do not want and even carry out behaviours that you know at the time are not really what you want to do. So why are you doing this? How can it be that you do not have control over what thoughts or emotions you have and what behaviours you carry out? How can you be two very different people at different times?

Technology can go some way to answering this question. Functional brain scanners show the blood supply in your brain going to the area that is being used. If you think calmly and rationally then we can see the blood going to the frontal area, the Human in your head, and you become the person that you want to be and that you really are. If you become emotional and somewhat irrational, especially when you are angry or distressed, then we see the blood supply go to your Chimp, and you would usually say this is not how you want to be and that you don't want this. The truth is that it is your Chimp, an emotional machine, that is overpowering your Human mind.

This starts to explain many things, such as why you worry or why you say things in the heat of the moment and then regret them, or why you can't stop eating or why you don't exercise when you really want to but just can't get your act together. The list is endless. Wonder no more: it is not you doing these things, it is your Chimp that is hijacking you. Having a Chimp is like owning a dog. You are not responsible for the nature of the dog but you are responsible for managing it and keeping it well behaved. This is a very important point and you should stop and think about this because it is crucial to your happiness and success in life.

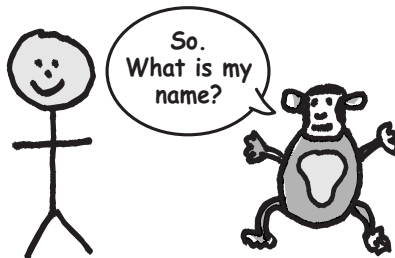
**Key Point**

*You are not responsible for the nature of your Chimp but you are responsible for managing it.*

**The Chimp within**

To reiterate, the Chimp within your head is a separate entity to you. It was born when you were born but actually has nothing to do with you as a Human. It is simply part of your machinery. For example, when you were born you were given a certain colour of eyes. You didn't choose this colour, it was given to you. It was in your genes. There isn't much you can do about it, so you accept your eye colour and get on with your life. Similarly you didn't choose your Chimp, it was given to you and you need to accept it. It has a mind of its own and thinks with original thoughts that are not yours. It is a living machine that is built to serve a purpose, which is to ensure the next generation. It has a personality of its own and it can run your life for you, usually not very well, but it can do it! It is an extremely powerful emotional machine.

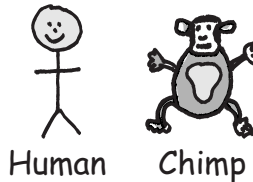
You might wish to give your Chimp a name and introduce yourself because it plays one of the biggest parts in your life. Throughout your life, you (the Human) and your Chimp (your emotional thinking machine) will often do battle.



### **Key Point**

*One of the secrets of success and happiness is to learn to live with your Chimp and not get bitten or attacked by it. To do this, you need to understand how your Chimp behaves, and why it thinks and acts in the way that it does. You also need to understand your Human and not muddle up your Human with your Chimp.*

The Psychological Mind therefore has two independent thinking machines that also independently interpret our experiences.



The two beings that think and then interpret

- The Human is you, and you live in your frontal lobe.
- The Chimp is your emotional machine, given to you at birth, and it lives in your limbic system.

### **The third part of the Psychological Mind**

The ‘Psychological Mind’ also has a storage area for thoughts and behaviours called the Computer, which is spread throughout the whole brain.



The storage of information for reference

The Computer stores information that the Chimp or Human has put into it. It then uses this information to act for them in an automatic way or it can serve as a reference point.

So now that you have a basic understanding of what is inside your head, let us start the journey across the Psychological Universe. We can see how you are operating with your Human, Chimp and Computer in different circumstances and how you can use them to your advantage and understand yourself better.

## Summary key points

- The Psychological Mind is made up of three separate brains: Human, Chimp and Computer.
- You are the Human.
- Your Chimp is an emotional thinking machine.
- Your Computer is a storage area and automatic functioning machine.
- Any one of them can take complete control but usually they work together.

### **Suggested exercise:**

#### *Development time*

#### **What is 'development time' and why have it?**

Simply put, 'development time' is time specifically set aside that is dedicated to reflecting on how you are managing yourself. You will benefit most from the model of the Chimp, the Human and the Computer if you spend time thinking through the concepts involved and then implementing them. The best way to make sure that you establish 'development time' is to make it into a habit. Habits are formed when they are easy to do.

Therefore, setting aside a specific time in the day that is sacrosanct for development thinking will increase your chances of it happening regularly. This session must be easy to do otherwise your Chimp won't agree and you won't do it! So making the session just ten minutes long is more likely to establish the habit than making the session an hour long. Try to establish ten minutes a day. By reflecting during development time, the Human is reviewing what is in the Computer and modifying it. As we will see in future chapters, this is critical to managing your Chimp.

### **What to do**

During this time, you need to look back over the last 24 hours and reflect on how you managed it. Keep a logbook and write only one or two lines for each day, which will help focus your mind on how you can improve the way that you do things or how you are thinking. It will also help you to work through the points raised in this book.

### **An example**

Here is a suggestion for the first few sessions. Try to improve your ability to recognise when your Chimp is hijacking you with thoughts, feelings and behaviours that you don't want to have. By doing this, you are learning to recognise the difference between yourself and your Chimp and who is in control at any point in time. This will help to make clear that there are two brains operating within your head and only one of them is you.