

**Lighter than this, Free-er than this – getting into the ZONE – by Julia Woodman**  
*Stress Consultant, Life Coach, Counsellor, and Writer*

There is a system called Mentastics, which is short for Mental Gymnastics, founded by Milton Trager in America. This system helps people to relearn how to move well after they have suffered restrictions in their movements. There are many specific movements, but it can also be used to help anyone move gently to stretch their bodies in ways that feel intuitively right. The main mental side of it is to “hook up” the mind with the body in a dynamic yet peaceful state. This can be triggered simply by thinking the questions “What can be lighter than this? What can be free-er?”, and your body and mind respond by doing things in a less tense or forced way, becoming naturally lighter and free-er. “Hook up” is similar to getting into the zone.. It really is amazing what can be achieved.



These simple mind : body linking questions can be used to help with many things :

- Sport - optimise your performance. Get into the zone, where you are lightly focused, not trying to force things, and your body can seem to fly.
- Study – learn faster with light concentration. Trying too hard can get in the way. Playing music in the background is often helpful. Find ways to have fun, for example you could sing acronyms to help you remember lists. You could even do your own light body movements to reinforce memory. It will seem much easier to learn.
- Before exams - feel more relaxed and confident. Use the questions to entrain your mind to relax and just get on with it instead of worrying.
- Before public speaking - feel centred. Take a few deep breaths, and use the questions and feel your body grounding to the earth and becoming calm.
- Before Interviews – feel ready to do your best, by following the same pattern as above. Of course, make sure you arrive well prepared too.
- Debate – be relaxed but on the ball during debates. Again, these questions just magically help you get into the zone where you can function optimally.
- Argument Prevention – don’t get over excited, think before you speak or act, it saves a lot of embarrassment later. If you remember the questions, these will help you pause instead of doing anything silly.
- Wellbeing – let your body fine tune itself and tell you if it needs anything. If you do those intuitive movements, you are tuning into your body, so that you are listening to it, and responding to its needs. You can do it lying or standing still too. Just take your deep breaths, ask the questions, and focus inwards gently.

- Confidence Boosting before social activities. If you are a not usually too at ease around other people, this will all help. It will probably also help you play better pool, darts, bowls, etc.
- Managing Stress at work or home. If a situation arises, what better way to immediately lift yourself above it instead of getting sucked or dragged down.
- Managing Anger anywhere. Keep yourself out of trouble by using these questions to just help you stop and lighten up instead of react.
- Managing Habits – it can be easier than you might think to change habits! Every time you want to transgress, you can use these questions to remind yourself how good it feels to not be at the mercy of your habits, and rise above them, taking control of your life by doing what you choose to do instead.
- Overcoming Fears. Any fears can be stilled if you “hook up” your mind and body, and feel the dynamic yet peaceful connection. Breathe deeply but gently and feel the power and peace flowing through your veins.
- Overcoming doubts, anxiety, and worry. Again, use the questions to just remind yourself that everything is okay really. If you feel good, you can easily face stuff. Worry etc are totally useless things anyway, they don’t help you understand or cope with anything, they just get in the way, so don’t let them steal your energy. Stop worrying about how things might appear to others and just be yourself.
- Forgiveness – letting go of what has been hurting you. If someone else hurt you then you need to forgive yourself for holding onto it for so long as well as forgive them. Claim back your power by using these questions to boost your sense of lightness and freedom, and just let yourself see that there is no point in holding onto things that have been giving you grief.
- Letting Go of Past Issues. Again, these issues and worries need not hurt you anymore today. Ask yourself the two questions, and let them slip away. The power and the peace infusing your body helps your mind to know that you are ready to move on with new things, and the past is no longer needed.



Take an imaginary shower to clear & cleanse yourself. If you are letting go of stuff then this is an extra visualisation you can use to just help clean away the last remnants of what you no longer need, whether it be past issues, pain, old beliefs, negativity, bad habits, etc. You know you can now move beyond these. Just let the water wash away anything you don’t need from both inside and outside of you – that’s why it has to be the imagination

rather than a real shower, but there is no reason why you can't do it in the real shower anyway, and just imagine the internal bit.

No matter how squeaky clean you might come out of your shower, don't forget about these magic questions - you may need them for other things still. Let them help you live to the best of your ability. Even just walking down the street, they can help you feel at one with the world whenever you remember them.

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**Julia Woodman – Life Coach, Counsellor, Stress Consultant, and Writer**



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