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## CLEAR THINKING

from Uncommon Knowledge

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Psychology for success, health and happiness  
February 2007  
Sent only to subscribers

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In this month's Clear Thinking...

- 1: Review: Head First
- 2: Teaching Tale: The Princess and the Crown
- 3: Inspiring Quote: Madness

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February hypnosis course is a sell out!

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the first course has sold out already.

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until September!

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Hi

Do you need to be mad to be free?

What does it take to get out of the rut of what it is  
acceptable to think and acceptable to do – and do  
something different?

Is Norman Cousins, subject of our book review, mad to think that laughing can have a positive influence on malign medical conditions?

Is it madness to start telling stories in the middle of a crisis?

You will have to make up your own mind - after you've enjoyed this issue...

Enjoy Clear Thinking!

Roger Elliott & Mark Tyrrell  
Uncommon Knowledge Ltd

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### 1: Review: Head First

Head First: The Biology of Hope and the Healing Power of the Human Spirit  
Norman Cousins

Norman Cousins has long been a hero of mine. In 'Head First' Cousins lays out more evidence for the great healing power of positive expectation and emotion.

His own story is pretty amazing. A leading journalist and editor of 'Saturday Review', he suffered debilitating and life threatening health problems, including a major heart attack and cancer. However, he

was determined to be positive and claims he used humour and hope to nurse himself back to health. He told his story in full in 'Anatomy of an Illness', published in 1978. He was subsequently appointed adjunct professor at the School of Medicine, UCLA.

In 'Head First' he sets out to describe how the conscious cultivation of positive emotion can create the right internal environment for medicine to work effectively.

He offers many anecdotes of researchers, physicians and patients who combine medical treatments with the deliberate creation of hope and other positive emotions, particularly laughter, subscribing to the principle that 'a merry heart doeth good like a medicine'.

Cousins describes how fear and despair cause biochemical damage and how positive attitudes promote wellness and healing. He supports his fascinating anecdotes with powerful scientific data demonstrating how the mind can hugely influence the course of illness and health.

In 'Head First' Cousins also explains how to encourage confidence and hope in patients in order to activate all their resources against their illness. He shows how a cultivated positive attitude (as an adjunct to good medical treatment) can lead the body toward health.

Even if your life is not touched by illness, this book is a great testimony to the benefits of laughter and optimism. It is scientific, thoroughly researched and a highly inspirational read.

You can read this review online:

[Head First by Norman Cousins](#)

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## 2: Teaching Tale: The Princess and the Crown

We live in a tumultuous world. Emotions run high and chaos is everywhere. But to see clearly, we need calm. And sometimes the inspiration for this calm can come from the unlikeliest of sources...

### The Princess and the Crown

There was once a beautiful and powerful princess whose every whim and desire was immediately satisfied by a legion of attentive servants.

One starlit night the princess was reclining in her garden, gazing down into a serene clear pool admiring her own perfect reflection. Suddenly, the crown slipped from her head and disappeared under the surface. The princess screamed at the top of her voice and instantly a swarm of servants appeared.

“My precious crown has been lost in the pool!” bellowed the princess. “Retrieve it at once!”

So the servants of course at once leapt into the pool and began diving for the crown. Indeed, they thrashed around so desperately in their eagerness to find it that clouds of mud were stirred up from the bottom, turning the water ever murkier. And to no avail.

Suddenly the old story teller appeared in the garden. Calmly surveying the turmoil all around, he approached the agitated princess and said, “Your Highness, let me tell you a story...”

“Away, you foolish man!’ she cried. “What good is a children’s tale in remedying my misfortune?”

Ignoring this reproof as if she had not spoken, the teller of tales began to tell his story anyway.

And so beguiling, absorbing and engrossing was his tale that, in spite of herself, the princess found herself being drawn in, and began to feel that she could almost see the characters and events of the story happening before her. Indeed, so compelling were the story teller’s words that the servants themselves ceased their search for the lost crown and instead rested at the side of the pool to listen.

At last the tale was finished.

Silence reigned over the garden as the princess and her servants sat enthralled, not even noticing that the water in the pool was now as clear as glass.

And the old story teller peered into the pool and dived headlong into the water, and immediately resurfaced with the crown of the princess clasped in



