

SELF COACHING 101



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free your mind. free your life.



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This booklet was written by Brooke Castillo, creator of The Model. It has been modified, with permission, for Freedom Junkie. Enjoy!



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Why I Created the Model.....	4
What Got Us Here Will Not Get Us There	5
To Coach Ourselves We Only Have to Understand Five Things	6
Becoming Aware	10
Thought Downloads.....	10
Thinking on Purpose	12
Common Questions.....	21

Why I Created the Model

When I was younger I was taught how to walk, how to eat, how to read, how to add, and even how to drive a car. No one ever taught me how to think. They taught me what to think and why I should think what they told me, but they never taught me how to think a thought purposefully. I never took a class in thought management, in fact, I didn't even know that managing my thoughts was an option.

Later, when I went to college and studied Psychology, I learned that we do have some ability to manage our thoughts but this was only really necessary if we were suffering from some abnormal psychiatric condition that made us non-functional in the world. In other words, everything they taught me was so that I could help my patients within the medical model — not so I could help myself.

I went through life, like many of my clients, thinking what I was told to think or shown by example what and how to think. I believed the recycled thoughts of my parents and their parents. My young mind's programming went unquestioned and remained mainly out of my conscious awareness through many years of suffering and negative emotion. My negative thoughts ultimately led to negative results that seemed out of my control.

Now I know better.

Now I know that every thought we think can be a choice we make. I know now that I can retrain my mind to think in ways that bring me positive emotion and therefore positive results. I realize that it is not just what I happen to think in any moment that will determine the outcome of my life, but what I WANT to think that will bring me everything I desire and more.

I often say to my clients that someone should pull us aside at about age 25 and let us know that we can now stop borrowing our parents' thought patterns. They could fill us in on the truth that true adulthood is emotional adulthood which requires that we think for ourselves.

I went through life, like many of my clients, thinking what I was told to think or shown by example what and how to think.

What Got Us Here Will Not Get Us There

As a species we have evolved to this point by our will to survive. It was literally evolve or die.

We had to figure out how to avoid pain, seek pleasure, and do it all with the least amount of effort, in order to even be comfortable, fed, connected and literally alive. But those days are mostly gone. We no longer have to put any effort into being safe, fed, warm and connected. We have created such a high level of comfort for ourselves that there is very little motivation to create anything. We know we can survive with the least amount of effort.

So our next evolution will have to be purposeful. We will have to now be motivated by the exact opposite of comfort and safety. We will have to give up the familiarity of comfort and safety in order to grow. We will have to give up the unconscious state of pleasure seeking and responding and turn towards emotional challenge and creating. It is the next call on us as humans and most of us are not responding well.

As humans it is our privilege to think about what we are thinking about. We have the ability to learn that our thoughts, not our circumstances, create our feelings. That our feelings are the most important thing to know and pay attention to. When we are willing to feel all the feelings available to us as humans, we will move about our planet in a way that is much less fearful and much more compassionate.

As humans it
is our privilege
to think about
what we
are thinking
about.

As we are willing to pay attention, we will discover the power we all have.

That power starts with our thoughts and ends with our results.

To Coach Ourselves We Only Have to Understand Five Things

All of our lives are categorized into five things: Circumstances, Thoughts, Feelings, Actions and Results. There is nothing in this world that can't be categorized and understood within this framework.

Once we see how things are categorized, we can see very easily how our interacting with these things determines the whole of our lives.

Once we see how things are categorized, we can see very easily how our interacting with these things determines the whole of our lives. How we think about things determines how we feel about things. How we feel about things determines what we do. What we do or don't do creates our results. The sum results in our lives creates our life. Period.

Your thoughts create your life. They are important little sentences. I highly encourage you to pay attention to them. This will be harder than you think. So many of our thoughts seem "true", so we don't even recognize them as thoughts. That's where self-coaching can come in.

Here is how we define the five categories:

Circumstances: Things that happen in the world that we cannot control.

Thoughts: Sentences that happen in your mind. This is where you self-coach.

Feelings: Vibrations that happen in your body — caused by thoughts, not circumstances.

Actions: Behavior — what we do in the world. Can include inaction.

Results: What we see in the world (our lives) as an effect of our actions. The result will always be evidence for the original thought.

As you use this model and work on your thoughts, you will assume the position of the Watcher. Doing this work is the best way to get out of your socially programmed thought patterns and identify with a deeper level of consciousness. As the Watcher, you become more and more aware of who you really are — someone who is not at the mercy of unconscious thinking. Realizing that every feeling, action and result you create in your life is because of a thought, is life altering. The mere process of being aware of these components in your life is enough to change your life.

To further demonstrate this model, let me show you an example:

What is your current problem?

Answer this question without thinking too hard about it. Just write down your answer. It might look something like one of the problems listed below:

I have no meaning in my life. I am sick and tired of this.

I am sad.

My father is dying.

I hate my job.

I weigh 275 pounds.

I keep yelling at my kids.

I drink five glasses of wine a night. I am ugly.

I don't have enough money.

Once you have written down the problem — no matter how petty it might seem — you can categorize it into one of the five areas on the diagram.

For example: I am sad.

This is a feeling, so you would put sad next to "feeling" on the diagram, like this:

Circumstance

Thought

Feeling: SAD

Action

Result

From here you can fill out the rest of the diagram by asking the following questions:

What is the thought causing me to feel sad?

How do I act when I feel sad?

What is the ultimate result when I feel sad?

The same applies if you use a thought, for example:

I hate my job.

Here you would put this thought next to thought on the diagram...

Circumstance

Thought I HATE MY JOB

Feeling

Action

Result

...and then ask the following questions:

How do I feel when I think this thought?

How do I act when I think this thought?

What is the result in my life when I think this thought?

Here is a sample that a client filled out based on starting with a circumstance in her life:

CIRCUMSTANCE She did not show up on time.

THOUGHT She does not respect me.

FEELING Angry, sad, rejected.

ACTION Act passive aggressive. Make snide comments.

RESULT Less respect from her.

The circumstance is: She did not show up on time for a lunch date.

The thought this triggered was: She does not respect me.

When I think this thought, I feel angry, sad, and rejected.

I act in a way that is passive aggressive and snide towards her.

This gives me the ultimate result of loss of respect in my relationship with her, which proves the original thought: she doesn't respect me.

An alternate thought concerning the same issue will cause different feelings and therefore different results.

Circumstance: She did not show up on time.

Thoughts: She must be busy—I won't take it personally.

Feelings: Appreciative she made it, relaxed.

Actions: Act kind and understanding.

Results: No effect personally—no negativity.

Here again, it is the exact same circumstance creating a different experience based on the thinking. If, when my friend shows up late, I choose to think I'm just so happy to see her, (if that is believable to me) no matter that she is late, the feeling is happy and excited and the action is to engage with my friend. The result may be that we have a wonderful and respectful lunch. You can use this model to understand almost anything that is going on with you.

IT IS NEVER THE CIRCUMSTANCE CAUSING YOUR FEELINGS — IT IS ALWAYS YOUR THINKING ABOUT THE CIRCUMSTANCE.

Becoming Aware

When you become the Watcher, or a student of yourself, you have understood the power of self-coaching. You cannot be the Watcher of your thoughts and also be your thoughts at the same time. When you shine a light on the thoughts in your mind and step out of yourself, you can see that you are not what you do, what you think, your results, or your body.

After identifying the thoughts that aren't working, you can then consciously decide on your own terms what you will choose to think.

The part of you that is the Watcher is the part of you that is connected to all other human beings and all other energies. When you tap into the part of you that is not the part of you reacting to emotions, you have tapped into the part of you that is powerful beyond measure.

The power of this process is in first recognizing the thinking that you may not be aware of and understanding how you are creating your own experience with your thinking.

After identifying the thoughts that aren't working, you can then consciously decide on your own terms what you will choose to think. All those negative thoughts, created by that small peanut-sized area in your brain, are running around like wild animals and can be understood, acknowledged, corralled, released, and/or changed.

THOUGHT DOWNLOADS

A great way to become more conscious, even before you understand the model, is by doing thought downloads. A thought download is simply a five minute writing assignment. We ask you to write about a general or specific problem. Just free write one sentence after another.

Just simply write for five minutes without editing. When you understand this work you might try to stop negative thinking as it is presenting. This is a HUGE mistake. You want to do your mental hygiene. With sixty thousand thoughts per day, and most of them unconscious, you will uncover dozens of negative thoughts. This does not mean that you aren't doing a good job in your life. It just means you are a human with a brain.

The way I like to think of this is in relation to our homes. No matter how sophisticated your home is, it gets dirty weekly. It needs cleaning. It doesn't matter how smart or refined it is, it still needs cleaning once a day and then deep cleaning once a week. That is exactly how our minds are. We need to keep an eye on them and try to keep them clean, and then every week it is smart to bring someone in to help, if possible (a coach), to see what you can't see.

Here are the reasons to use this model daily:

- To feel better
- To create results
- To become conscious
- To think more deliberately
- To create/manifest what you want in your life
- To remove negative thinking and emotions
- To create positive thinking and emotions

Thinking on Purpose

You have been introduced to the concept that I created called 'The Self Coaching 101 Model'. In that model we talk about how our thoughts create our feelings. Our feelings drive our actions and our actions create our results.

Now, a lot of us don't realize that many of our thoughts are not serving us. We think that it's the circumstances of our lives that are creating our experience in the world, and really, what it is, it's our thinking about our lives that's creating our experience in the world. We really want to start focusing more on what exactly we are thinking and why, and ask - are we thinking that deliberately? Are we really making the choice of what we want to think in our lives?

I want to talk about this a little bit because I think it's really important to review and to understand that there are things in the world that happen that we have no control over.

Other people, our past, things that have happened to us ... we have no control over those things, but we do have control over how we think about those things and what we make those things mean.

A lot of times, people will say, "But, I don't feel like I have control over my thinking." The reason why you don't feel like you have control over your thinking, initially, is because you aren't aware of what you're thinking. The first step has to be becoming more aware of how you're thinking about your life.

I'm not talking about just becoming more mindful of your life. I'm talking about becoming more mindful of your mind and really thinking about what is going on in your mind and really thinking about why you think what you think, and if you want to continue to think the way that you're thinking. These are deep questions, but once you start really watching your own mind and eavesdropping on it, you realize that you aren't your brain. You're the person watching your brain.

Other people, our past, things that have happened to us ... we have no control over those things, but we do have control over how we think about those things and what we make those things mean.

A lot of times, your brain has been programmed inadvertently without consciousness and not deliberately, and you haven't been telling your mind what to do, so your mind is so busy telling you what to do. You're obeying it because it's your mind, and so our work is all about first of all becoming aware of what you're thinking and understanding your patterns. When you can start recognizing, "The reason I act this way is because of what I'm feeling and thinking. The reason I feel this way is because of what I'm thinking," that can really change everything for you because that awareness, in and of itself, can help with the process of change.

The next step is really to start deciding what you want to think on purpose. If you don't tell your brain what to focus on or what to think about.

Now, most people start to become aware of their thinking. I just had someone make a comment on 'The Life Coach School' on one of the podcasts saying, "Okay. Great. I'm aware of what I'm thinking, but what I'm realizing is that I'm only thinking about how I'm not worth anything, and I'm thinking about how I'm no good and I'm not useful."

It's really powerful to know that you're thinking that, but you don't want to stop there. Once you become aware of all your negative thinking, you don't want to go, "Okay. Now, I'm a more mindful person." I remember doing this work myself and I started feeling like, "Okay. I'm feeling my feelings. I'm aware of my thinking, but all I'm aware of is all my crappy thoughts and all my crappy feelings. Now what?" That was the missing piece always for me. It was like, "What do I do now with all of this?"

The answer is, that once you become aware of your thinking patterns and your feeling patterns and how you're reacting to them, the first step really becomes catching yourself before you react. When you recognize that something is just a thought-feeling combination, and not something you have to react to, that's when you can really start changing those behavioral patterns.

The next step is really to start deciding what you want to think on purpose. If you don't tell your brain what to focus on or what to think about, it will go to the old patterns. The brain likes to do what it's really good at. What it's really good at is stuff that it's done a lot of. Unfortunately, for many of us, that's a lot of very negative anxiety-producing, frustration-producing thinking.

If you feel sad about something, that's a choice a lot of the times.

Okay. Step one, become aware of what you're thinking. Notice how that's causing you to feel and react, and notice what results that is creating in your life. Now, I taught this concept to one of my students and she asked this really fantastic question. What she said was, "Okay. You've told us that if we think a certain way, we're going to get negative results. Shouldn't we resist thinking that way?" Then she said, "You've also told us not to resist our feelings and to feel them, so I feel like this is kind of contradictory."

It's a really good question but it's not accurate and it's not what I'm teaching. What I'm teaching is to allow everything. Allow your thoughts. Allow your feelings. Right? You decide whether you're going to react to them or not. Once you allow them, that's when you can increase your awareness of them. When you resist something, you block it out of your consciousness. It does not mean you stop thinking it. It certainly doesn't mean you'd stop feeling it, and you most likely will be reacting to it because it's unconscious.

That's why so many of us feel so out of control all the time because we feel like we don't know why we do what we do. "I don't want to eat that much food. I don't want to yell at my kids. I don't want to yell at my husband. I don't want to watch all of this TV," or "I don't want to be surfing the internet for hours and hours, but I just can't seem to control it." The reason why we're unable to control our reactions in our life is because we're unaware of the thoughts and feelings driving them. Once we become aware, it becomes much easier to notice the thought and the feeling before the reaction happens and to make a deliberate choice there. Ultimately, the choice can happen at the thought level, when you start directing your mind and telling it what to think.

One of the confusing things here is, my students will say to me, "Okay. Once I know that I'm having a lot of negative thinking, you tell me that I can direct my mind to become more positive. What I want to do is forget about all that negative thinking and just focus on the positive thinking." It can't be done that way, and it doesn't need to be done that way. Here's why:

If you are willing to feel any emotion, bring it on. If that is your attitude, you're not going to be so freaked out by the negative thoughts when they appear in your brain. They will appear because that's what you've trained your brain to do by living your life, and you're not supposed to live your whole life with positive emotion. There are instances in your life when you're going to want to choose negative emotion. That's part of the human experience, right?

If you feel sad about something, that's a choice a lot of times. You want to feel sad about something. If you feel upset about something, if you feel frustrated ... sometimes, those are the ways that you want to feel. Allowing yourself to feel the way you want to feel is a huge piece of it.

The other piece of it is just noticing. When you feel negative emotion that you don't have to resist, avoid or react to it, you can just simply feel it. What is the big deal? Feel some resistance. Feel some anxiety. Feel some frustration. If you are willing to feel those emotions, you will stop reacting to them. If you stop reacting to them, you will stop perpetuating them.

When you allow yourself to feel the negative emotion, then you can access the thought that's causing it. Now, most people make the mistake at this point and they start really wanting to get rid of it, slash it, and get rid of such negative thinking. "I can't believe I'm thinking that I have such low self-esteem. I can't believe that I'm thinking I'm such a terrible person." When you resist it, you can't understand it and I like to understand and allow everything because then I can own it and release it.

If you notice that you have a lot of thoughts about yourself that are "I'm no good", "I'm never going to amount to anything", "I'm never going to be able to lose weight", "I'm not as talented as those people", "I'm not as beautiful as those people", "I'm not as thin as those people" ... whatever it is that comes up for you, greet that thought with compassion. Notice that that's what you're thinking.

It's still a choice, but be curious why you are making that choice. Why you are choosing to think that, and really acknowledge that it is something you're choosing to think, and be compassionate with yourself about it. Just that in and of itself makes it so much easier to release it, because as long as you're pushing it away from you, it's really hard to hold it in the palm of your hand.

I like to think about these thoughts I have, especially the negative ones, as sentences that I can just put in the palm of my hand and have a look at them, and just see what's going on there with them. At that point, then I can decide, "Is this something I want to continue to think or not?" and then you can start focusing on what you do want to think.

When you allow yourself to feel the negative emotion, then you can access the thought that's causing it.

Now, this is not pretending to think positive emotion. This is not saying, "I wish I believed that I was beautiful, so I'm just going to go around saying 'I'm beautiful. I'm beautiful. I'm beautiful. I'm beautiful. I'm beautiful.'" Here's what you have to remember about all replacement thoughts and all focused thinking. You can't convince yourself of it. It has to be believable and it has to feel good.

One of the things that's really important is to move up the scale of thinking. If you are thinking of yourself as "I'm no good", don't try to go to, "I'm the best person in the whole wide world. Rainbows and daisies and sparkles." Right? Don't try and do that.

Go from, "I am no good. I'm not worth anything, to - I am a human being." Right? Can you see how it's a more neutral thought? It takes away some of the negative connotation and it shifts you into a different feeling without trying to pretend anything.

A lot of my clients with their bodywork, I'll tell them to go from, "I have a fat body" to just "I have a body," and go to the place where you recognize that you have a body. That neutral statement for yourself can be much better than, "I have an ugly fat body." "I have a body." That's a thought that you can focus your brain onto. "I have a body. I have a body. I have a body." Notice when the negative thought comes up, and you can direct it to "I have a body. I have a body."

Also, it's important before you start trying to 'Change your thinking', is notice when you think "I have a fat body", how do you feel, and then what do you do? Ironically, most of us eat when we think that way. That's just a good pattern to understand and be compassionate and non-judgmental about it. When you think, "I have no self-worth", "I'm not worth anything", how do you feel when you think that way, and then, what do you do?

A lot of my clients with their bodywork, I'll tell them to go from, "I have a fat body" to just "I have a body," and go to the place where you recognize that you have a body.

Then, can you just switch to "I was created by something bigger than myself. I am here. I am matter." A lot of people can't get to the place where they believe that they do matter, but they can get to the place where they know they have matter. They exist. Just making that shift from a negative to a neutral can be huge, and you direct your thought.

Two of the most important tools we use at the school involve asking questions and having goals.

This is not, "Oh my God. There's always a negative thought. I'm going to push, push, push, push, push, and push against it, so I can only think positive happy thoughts." That's not it. We notice the negative thoughts. We're not afraid of them because all they can do is cause negative emotion, and there's no emotion that we're not willing to feel, so no big deal.

"I'll feel whatever negative emotion comes. My boss yells at me. I have a thought he shouldn't yell at me. I feel frustrated. I'm willing to feel all of that. I'm willing to notice it, but I don't have to. I can notice that that's also a choice. Next time he yells at me, I can choose to think something different, but I may not. If I don't, it's okay because there is no emotion that I'm not willing to feel."

The difference when you're willing to feel an emotion, what happens because of that willingness, is that you don't have to react to it. It's the resisting of emotion that causes us to react, avoid. When we react to ourselves or avoid ourselves, that's when we go into these compulsive behaviors, and that's when we start acting in ways that we don't want to act.

The problem for most of us is we believe we are our thoughts. We believe that what we think is true about ourselves, and we think that what we think is who we are. If we're thinking a bunch of negative thoughts about ourselves, then we are going to believe that we are negative people, right? The truth is, those are just thoughts. That's not who we really are. Those are just thoughts that we have decided to think unconsciously, and we can decide to think something different.

Managing your mind and deciding what you wanted to think about is the secret to a happy life, period. If you are constantly thinking positive, wonderful things that you truly believe about yourself, you are going to feel much happier than if you're thinking thoughts that are negative about other people or yourself. Notice, whenever you have a thought, how does that thought feel? Notice that. Do I want to keep thinking that?

Now, if you try to approach this process with resistance and with anger, you're going to get into trouble, because then you're going to start adding thoughts on top of negative thoughts, and then you're going to beat yourself up for having the negative thoughts, and then you're going to try and push away the negative thoughts, and then you're going to pretend like you don't have the negative thoughts, right? What you need to do is step back and say, "That's a thought. That's interesting. That's fascinating. Why would I choose to think that I don't have any self-worth?"

Now, I'm not suggesting that you go back into your past and find some deep, dark reason. I'm just asking that you ask yourself that now. "Why would I choose to think that now? If I'm conscious of that thought and I notice that it's there, is that a thought I want to keep thinking? Why or why not? When I notice it, can I greet it with compassion and notice what it's causing me to feel without resistance, and then from there, having that awareness and that understanding, can I stop reacting to whatever that feeling is because I'm willing to feel any emotion? Then, from there, the ultimate step is, can I change what my brain is focusing on?"

Now, once
you've
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in, then,
you need to
practice them.

Two of the most important tools we use at the school involve asking questions and having goals. Those are the two best ways I know of how to direct your brain. There's this idea that I got from Deepak Chopra that is really fascinating to me. What he suggests is that our imagination can be used for either anxiety or creativity. Right? We're either worrying about something which creates anxiety for ourselves, or we're creating something. I love that concept.

If you direct your mind in a way that's thinking about creation, that's thinking about a goal you want to create or a future you want to have, you're using your imagination. You're putting your brain to work to do what you want it to do. I mean really, how cool would it be to think about your brain as an employee, as a tool, as something that's been given to you to utilize? We've just neglected it. We haven't really told it what to do, so it's just trying to get good at whatever it keeps repeating, instead of being told what to repeat.

This is how you want to manage you. This is what I want you to think. This is what I want you to do. Your brain is an amazing tool. One of the best ways is to have a really exciting goal that you think about every day. You look at the goal every day, you tell your brain, "That's what I want you to focus on." Any of you guys who have read Napoleon Hill's 'Think and Grow Rich', he talks about this in detail. He talks about how the brain needs to be thinking about what it wants and repeat and repeat and repeat and repeat, and then that's what it will go about the business of doing.

The second thing you can do is to ask yourself amazingly good questions. If you ask yourself an awesome question, "How can I feel great today? How can I help the world today? How can I contribute today? What can I think today that will create a lot of positive emotion?" ... When you ask your brain questions, it can't help but find an answer. That is what the brain is trained to do. It loves to answer questions.

Just write
down
everything
you're thinking
and notice
how it causes
you to feel,
and take the
power back.

If you ask it a really crappy question, it's going to give you a lot of negative thinking. "Why am I so tired? Why am I so stupid? Why don't I have any self-worth?" If you ask yourself those questions, it will give you answers. It will give you thoughts to think. If you ask it positive questions, it will give you thoughts to think that are positive, right? "Why am I so lucky? Why did this world treat me with such amazing bounty?" ... You can come up with all of these answers.

"What do I have to be thankful for? What do I love right now? What makes me so happy right now?" Those are questions that are going to get your brain focused, right? It's going to tell your brain what to do, and it's going to come up with a lot more positive thinking for you.

Now, once you've gotten some thoughts that you really do believe in, then, you need to practice them. I suggest you put them on stickies, put them on three by five cards, write them in your binders, write them in your computers. Remind yourself what you want the brain to be thinking. You need to feed it what you want it to do. It's just like a computer.

It doesn't really care if it thinks negative thoughts or positive thoughts. It's just a thinker. It just does what it's told. If it's been told a lot of negative things its whole life, that's what it knows how to do really well. If it's been told a lot of positive things its whole life, that's what it knows how to do. The awesome part about it is that you can decide to change that. If you want to think different thoughts, you're the one that can program it.

Step one, figure out what you're thinking. Become aware of it.

Step two; be willing to allow any feeling. Don't be afraid to feel any feeling. The worst thing that can happen is you have a vibration in your body. That's all a feeling is. Remind yourself, if you were telling an alien what a feeling was and they're like, "What's the big deal?" It'll be very hard for you to explain what the big deal is. It's a vibration in your body. You're willing to feel anything. You won't be afraid of your thinking and you'll be willing to really look at it.

Then, the next step is to stop reacting to those feelings by being aware of them. Then, from that point, you can decide to start changing how you feel by changing how you think. That is how the progression goes. I want to really encourage you to do a thought download, to really look at what you're thinking and notice how it's causing you to feel.

Just write down everything you're thinking and notice how it causes you to feel, and take the power back. When you recognize that you're the one making you feel a certain way, it's really powerful to know that. If you're willing to allow it instead of resist it, and you're willing to look at it with curiosity instead of beating yourself up, that's where your power is going to come in where you're going to be able to change what you're thinking. I'm not talking about pretending like you're happy. I'm talking about genuinely creating the emotion you want to feel most of the time.

Let's talk about what you are currently thinking, what do you want to start thinking, and maybe, what is that in between thought that's going to get you there. How are you going to bridge from negative thought to positive thought, and is there a feeling that you don't think you're willing to feel and why not?

Common Questions

What if I can't figure out what I am feeling?

Breathe. Sit still. Ask yourself if you feel more mad, glad, sad, or happy. This is more an art than a science. You don't have to be too specific for this to work. If you feel negatively, it is worth doing the work to find the thought causing it. The more you get in touch with your body and the different vibrational frequencies that different thoughts cause, the more you will be able to identify and name your feelings more specifically.

Do thoughts always cause my feelings? Isn't it sometimes the feelings causing my thinking? Can a feeling just "come over" me?

There are two ways we experience a feeling. One way is through physical sensations caused by involuntary physical response and the other way is by our thinking. There are times when our feelings are a physical response that precedes our thought. In the example of being on a roller coaster, you may feel fear based on the stimuli of the height of the cart and the sensation of the movement—this feeling is a physical reaction that moves straight from the senses to the amygdala and then through the body without passing through the brain. But just seconds later we process the stimuli through the brain and think a thought that either intensifies the fear (I am going to die!) or lessens the fear (This is just a ride and I am going to be fine. This is fun.)

For the sake of this work the most important distinction is in understanding that our thoughts—not our circumstances or other people—cause our feelings. Even with involuntary physical reactions, the feeling and vibration is intensified or lessened by our thought.

Is it important to always write it down?

In the beginning I recommend you write it down using a worksheet and get the thoughts on paper. I have many scraps of paper and napkins that I start by writing this on:

C
T
F
A
R

This can be done anywhere and gets the thought out of my head so I can see it more clearly. Once you get better at it you might be able to do it quickly in your head, but for painful thoughts I still write out and complete the entire model.

You say that it is my thought causing the feelings, but what if it really is just my husband? He really does say negative things to me—I don't just “think” he does.

It is never the husband. You can't outsource your feelings. His actions are caused by his feelings and his thoughts cause his feelings, not yours. I believe that your husband says negative things to you, but I don't believe that what your husband says causes your feelings. What you think about what your husband says is what causes your feelings. If you believe him or think he is disrespecting you or if you think he should be behaving in a way that is different from reality, you will feel pain.

The more you get in touch with your body and the different vibrational frequencies that different thoughts cause, the more you will be able to identify and name your feelings more specifically.

No one causes your feelings but you. I know it is hard to break the habit of thinking, “He hurt my feelings,” but that thought is always a lie. You hurt your feelings each and every time.

Now, again, I am not condoning his behavior or telling you to stay with a man who acts this way. I am just telling you the truth: that you are the one who makes the choices of who you are going to spend your time with, listen to, and believe. If you choose him and you believe him, you hurt your feelings.

Can't we take action and change our results without changing our thoughts?

Can we move up the model backward? Yes. This can work and I have seen it work, but this is definitely the hard way. It is much easier to change the thought and then take action to prove it true than to take action against a negative thought. But yes, it can be done. Just make sure you have truly changed the thought or your new results will be temporary.

Are excuses the same as thoughts?

Yes. Plug any excuse into the model and you will see the result it gets you.

I find it hard to admit some of the thoughts I am thinking. How can I get over this?

Ask yourself why it is hard to admit your painful thoughts. This answer is a great thought to start with. Remember, you don't have to admit these thoughts to anyone but yourself. Also, one of the reasons some of us have a hard time admitting our thoughts is that we beat ourselves up for our thinking. This serves no purpose and has no upside. Try to be curious and kind when doing this work. Be a compassionate student of yourself. Know that there is a reason why you think the way you do and it is okay. It is also okay to change your thoughts now.

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