

## The Power of Thought

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The most common and prevalent human activity is thought. We think and think and think – we even think so much that we can't sleep. But for all that thinking, most thoughts are not very thoughtful. They are often repetitive, unproductive, and all too often, limiting and destructive. But they can also be enlightening, profound and visionary. It all comes down to a simple issue – do our thoughts control us or do we control our thoughts.

For the most part, thoughts follow habitual patterns. We rarely choose what to think, but rather follow the habitual patterns established early in life. While habits are helpful – they conserve time, energy and effort – they also become prisons, often locking thoughts into patterns that are counter-productive, fearful and/or depressing, and rigid.

We've all met individuals with "closed minds," unable to break their patterns of thought, or think "outside the box." They are locked inside the box of their own thought habits. This is directly related to their level of fear, worry, guilt and other disturbing emotional patterns, which, in turn, are nothing more than thoughts.

Our ability to think effectively is directly related to our level of self-confidence, our ability to relax, and to be present to the moment. The

second that we become threatened, we create fear and worry and our mind begins to tighten up and close down. The more worried we are, the more rigid and habitual our thinking becomes. Fear is a mind-killer, a little death that locks us into smaller and smaller boxes. When a manager uses fear as a motivational tool, the long-term outcome is reduced quality and quantity of performance, increased health problems, and lower morale. Those who have had *Strategic Intelligence Skills* training know that breath awareness is one of a number of powerful tools to direct thought and control the two powerful dragons of the mind, fear (worry) and self-hatred (guilt, self-doubt, etc.).

The way we think creates the personal reality that we must live. This does not mean that we literally create the physical world around us by our thoughts. (Those who teach this philosophy, called subjective idealism, don't do it while standing in traffic.) Our personal reality lies in the meaning that we create about the external reality that surrounds us. It's all about the meaning that we create with our thoughts.

For example, it is not what someone says or does that disturbs us, it is what we say to ourselves about what they do or say that creates stress for us. Thoughts are the interpretation of events, not the events themselves. If I am skillful

with my thinking, I create the opportunities, meaningfulness and successful outcomes.

It is not given to us to control the world around us, but it is given to us to control how we create meaning in the world around us. We do this thru the power of thought.

Because thought is such a powerful tool, we must be careful not to allow our thoughts to become irrevocable truths in our mind. Thoughts are never "the Truth," they are only thoughts. Beliefs are temporary shelters where we can reside in order to ask better questions. When beliefs become confused with "Truth," they become rigid boxes that keep us from adapting to the changing reality around us.

Pay close attention to your thoughts. Are they useful? Do they help you, lead to a deeper understanding, and open new possibilities? Our mind is the finest instrument we have. Through self-awareness and self-discipline, we can use this instrument to create the world we really want rather than something determined by old habits and patterns.

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*Blessed be the flexible of body  
and mind, for they shall never  
be bent out of shape.*

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