

BRAIN

MAXIMIZATION



Greg Frost

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INTRODUCTION

The human brain is definitely the most fascinating thing that's ever existed. It weighs just barely 3 pounds yet it is estimated by scientists to contain up to 100 billion cells. And despite decades of continuous and extensive research, we're not even close to understanding how our brain truly works. To put things in perspective, the human brain is a million times more complex than even the most advanced computer that's been invented to date.

Our brain is split into two halves, namely the left and right hemispheres. The left hemisphere is responsible for all our systematic and logical reasoning functions, such as language comprehension, grammar processing and thought analysis, amongst many others. The right hemisphere is on the other hand responsible for all our non-verbal forms of spontaneous thought processing, such as design and creative thinking.

Imagine, if you will, a vast network of computers connected through the internet, communicating with one another simultaneously at a dizzying pace. That's what the human brain is like. It's essentially a dynamic bionetwork that contains a whole multitude of neuronal networks which are constantly competing with each other for incoming stimuli that are captured through our sensory organs. The neuronal networks that succeed in the processing of incoming new stimuli eventually make up the enduring and more reliable parts of the larger network in our brain, while the weaker neuronal networks are isolated and eventually rendered dysfunctional, obsolete.

In theory, the structure of the brain's neuronal networks are influenced and shaped by the type of information it receives, and how it processes that information will determine its state in the future. It may come as surprise to you, but humans actually possess the ability to change the brain's very structure, simply by changing thought patterns.

You may not be aware of this, but each time we pick up a new skill, a new pattern is established within the brain. The more we repeat that skill, the clearer that pattern becomes, which fortifies the connection between our brain cells. It's through this process that a new habit or pattern is conceived from. It's only natural that the more we hone a particular skill, the better we become at it. As a result we forge stronger connections in our brain and fortify its intricate circuitry.

Rewiring our neural circuits is quite possibly the best way to help establish new pathways in our brain. Shown below are examples where rewiring our brain is often a great help.

- 1.) Gaining new insight, new approaches for different situations**
- 2.) Encouraging innovation to break new ground and explore the unknown**
- 3.) Substituting negative thoughts with positive ones**
- 4.) Thinking more creatively and with more freedom**
- 5.) Eliminating past bad habits**

The thoughts you have on a daily basis go some way towards determining the way we react to certain situations in life. Thoughts affect our emotions and vice versa. Only through changing your thinking will emotions and behavior change for the better.

Ever wondered why you see something and immediately think, "Oh that's a dog" or "That's a roller-coaster"? Well that's because the right hemisphere of your brain distinguishes and identifies the structure that your eyes see for what it literally is. The left hemisphere also helps by analyzing whatever our eyes have seen, and accesses our past memories to uncover experiences that it associates with whatever is being seen by us at that point in time.

Your parents or teachers might have told you to "use your brain" or "use your mind". You might think both the mind and brain are one and the same, but they couldn't be more different. It's important for you to understand that our brain is actually a physical biological entity. It's the

gray matter that can be found within the inner recesses of our skull. It's also a highly integral part of the central nervous system and is responsible for all our critical cognitive processes like muscle control, coordination, sensory reception, memory retention and speech production.

Our mind is on the other hand, not something that you can quantify physically. It's essentially a term that's used to describe our more advanced cerebral functions, such as our conscious and sub-consciousness. So the mind has influence over things such as personality, thought, reason, intelligence, emotions and instincts. Our intellect and a human being's endless capacity to learn are what set us apart from all other living creatures on earth.

While it has been highly debated as to whether our brain or mind is more important, the truth is there is no definite answer to that question. The aim of this Brain Maximization is not to teach you everything there is to know about the human brain, but rather to shed light on some of the ways that you can attain a mindset that is constantly geared toward success by providing you a complete understanding of how the human brain works. By the end of this book, you'll know what's required to reprogram both your brain and mind to achieve limitless success in life.



CHAPTER 1: THE CONFLICT IN YOUR BRAIN

For those who have an active interest in either human behavior or psychology, chances are you've heard of "cognitive dissonance". This terminology was actually conceived by a psychologist in 1954 that went by the name of Leon Festinger. It was a term he used to describe the feelings of psychological discomforts that were produced by the collective presence of two singular, individual thoughts which didn't follow each other. He claimed that the greater the degree of discomfort experienced, the higher the tendency to reduce dissonance of the two individual cognitive elements. The dissonance theory implies that should people act in a manner that opposes their beliefs, they will eventually alter their beliefs to align with their actions (or vice-versa).

The quickest and easiest way for you to understand this concept is through a short example. Let's assume that you're a job seeker who's looking to choose between two companies to work for. After going for interviews at both places and being accepted by both companies for a similar position, you're asked to rate each company based on their pros and cons. Once you've made your decision, you're asked to rate both companies once again. It's natural that you'll rate the chosen company as better and the rejected company as worse after making your decision.



Thus, even though the company you choose wasn't rated higher at first, you will more often than not rate it higher at the end of the day. It wouldn't otherwise make any sense for you to select the lower rated company. This is in fact cognitive dissonance at work.

Another great example to show how cognitive dissonance works is how many people continue to smoke several packs of cigarettes or cigars though they realize that doing so is even drastically shortening their life spans. If you're not a smoker yourself, you've probably noticed this amongst your peers. They'll answer this form of cognitive dissonance by responding with thoughts such as, "Hey I've tried quitting and all but it's just too hard" or "It's nowhere near as bad as they make it out to be and anyway, I really do love smoking." Habitual smokers tend to justify their behaviors with valid excuses or complete denial of the issue at hand. This kind of behavior is usually exhibited when someone's faced with cognitive dissonance.

Contrary to popular belief, not everyone is confronted with the same degree of cognitive dissonance. Individuals whose lives are lived according to very consistent standards will feel the influences of cognitive dissonance more so than those whose lives are lived haphazardly. Cognitive dissonance is just one of the many millions of processes that work in our lives on a daily basis. Its human nature which make us dislike facing the possibility that we could be wrong, which limits the amount of new information we take in or think about stuff which doesn't fit within our pre-existing beliefs. This is what psychologists call "confirmation bias".

Even if the choices we make are ultimately proven unwise or wrong, we almost never want to second guess them. That's because when we second guess, we think of it as trying to imply that we aren't as smart as we've lead ourselves to believe. Which is when humans commit to a specific course of action, they become resistant to entertaining potential alternatives. This is the reason many of us prefer to lessen the chances of regret in our lives, and of course if possible, seek closure, thus bringing a definitive end to an event or relationship. Doing so decreases the chances of cognitive resonance taking place in the future.

Yet for all the talk about cognitive dissonance, not much has been said about what exactly one can do about it. Since the human brain was probably designed to think in such a way that defends our own world view or sense of self worth, is it necessarily an awful thing that we should undo?

The reason people often run into issues regarding cognitive dissonance is because it could be a lie onto itself. Like all lies, much is dependent on how big the lie is and how likely is it to hurt in you in the long run. This may sound harsh, but whether we choose to believe it or not, humans are hypocrites by nature. We tell “white lies” every single day without so much as blinking an eye, such as telling someone, “Hey, that looks great on you!” when we probably wanted to say something like, “Heavens, you look terrible in that!” Such small lies usually come with relatively small consequences, which is why we tell small lies more often compared to big lies.



Telling small lies helps to save our skins in certain situations, and our survival instincts have been with us since the first modern man, the first Homo Sapien, set foot on this earth.

This survival instinct has been ingrained in us so deeply, that our brain is programmed by default to work along the same lines. It "lies" to us by justifying that anything bad in our habits or behavior is acceptable, because the alternative is to either change these habits - which the brain justifies as being too much work - or we completely break down with guilt and render ourselves incapable of going on with our lives. In order for us to be able to live with ourselves, our brain occasionally tells us little white lies to make everything seem fine.

So you can see that though cognitive dissonance does help us make sense of the internal struggle we constantly face over any two opposing beliefs, it can also have the effect of reinforcing bad decision making in the future.

Yet our personalities have the power to negate the effects of cognitive dissonance to a certain extent. Research has shown that individuals with extroverted personalities are less likely to

suffer from the negative impact of cognitive dissonance and are also more inclined to not change their minds and stick to their current course of action. Introverts do the exact opposite, meaning they frequently experience dissonance related discomfort and are more inclined to alter their attitude in order achieve parity with others.

But what if you couldn't change your personality? Awareness of your own self is actually the key to understanding what kind of a role does cognitive dissonance play in our lives. A tell tale sign of cognitive dissonance at work is if you constantly find yourself trying to rationalize or justify behaviors that you clearly don't believe in. And if you like to explain your actions by saying stuff like "That's always been the way I do things", that's cognitive dissonance at work as well. The famous Greek philosopher Socrates once said, "An unexamined life is not worth living." which means always challenging whatever it is you thought you believed in life.



An integral part of being self-aware that really helps to deal with the side-effects of cognitive dissonance is analyzing the countless decisions we make every other day in our lives. You may not realize this, but the dissonance is often attempting to tell us something whenever we feel better after deciding to move forward with a decision.

When this happens, the decision we went ahead with probably wasn't as right as we initially thought it to be. The truth is most of the time, the decision we made was clearly wrong. Learning to admit that it was wrong makes it a whole lot easier for us to move forward.

Another aspect of cognitive dissonance exists too, and it's called cognitive distortion. Just what on earth is a cognitive distortion anyway? Well it's basically the way our mind tell us that something isn't really true. Such erroneous thoughts often have the tendency to emphasize

negative emotions in our mind, supposedly deceiving us into thinking that these thoughts are actually rational in nature, when the only thing it really does is make us feel really bad about ourselves.

For example, you might tell yourself, “Whenever I try something new, I always fail which means I’ll fail at everything I do in life.” This is a fantastic example of what we call “polarized” or “white or black” thinking. When this happens, we’re seeing things in terms of absolutes, which means we think that if we fail at just one thing, it’s a given that we’ll definitely fail at everything. And if you also thought, “I am a total loser and sure am one heck of a failure”, you’d be over generalizing, thinking a failure at one thing to be equal to failing all things.

For instance, a person might tell themselves, “I always fail when I try to do something new; I therefore fail at everything I try.” This is an example of “black or white” (or *polarized*) thinking. The person is only seeing things in absolutes — that if they fail at one thing, they must fail at **all** things. If they added, “I must be a complete loser and failure” to their thinking, that would also be an example of *overgeneralization* — taking a failure at one specific task and generalizing it their very self and identity.

Alright to give you a better picture of what we’re talking about, let’s go through an exercise which will help you to identify whether you engage in cognitive distortion. Look through the points below and rate yourself according to how much you think you engage in that from of cognitive distortion, with one being low and ten being high. At the end of the exercise, ask yourself, “Is it possible for me to stop thinking with distortions and instead think in a different way?”

- 1) **Absolutes (All-Or-Nothing) Mentality:** This is a type of cognitive distortion that’s defined by absolutes. It’s basically polarized thinking, which means you perceive all things in terms of black or white. When you think this way, a failure at any one thing will equate to a failure at all things to you.

2) **Dismissing Positives:** You dismiss your past achievements as being something that only happened based on pure coincidence. You'll entertain thoughts like "I aced the interview because it was really easy!" When we do this, a negative belief is constantly upheld by us, something that actually doesn't align with our usual experiences.



3) **Predicting Negatives:** You make yourself believe something bad is going to happen at some point during your day. It could be that your boss explodes at you in front of all your colleagues or that you get stuck at gridlock in rush hour, which makes you late for work as a result. Okay you don't know for sure that those events would actually happen, but the fact that you keep telling yourself it will happen makes it seem real enough.

4) **Forming Negative Conclusions:** A negative response to a particular situation instantly comes into your mind, though you probably don't have the necessary facts to support the conclusion you arrive at. For example, you'd think "Damn my friend's not here yet, so he must have met with an accident along the way."

5) **Negative Or Erroneous Labeling:** When you attempt to explain a particular behavior or event, you're over-generalizing. So instead of explaining the specific behavior, you attach a negative label to yourself, such as "I am useless". What mislabeling does is make you describe events with emotionally charged language. An example would be, "If your co-worker behaved rather rudely towards you called him a bastard, you are labeling that person."

6) **Overemphasis Of Others' Achievements:** You place far too much emphasis on other stuff, such as promoting someone else's achievements while dismissing yours.

- 7) **Zeroing In On Negatives:** Like looking for a needle in a haystack, you have the tendency to detect negative elements in any situation and dwell on it for as long as possible. This warps whatever views you previously held about a particular situation or person. All reality is distorted beyond recognition, so you have no idea what is right or wrong.

- 8) **Negative "Mind Reading":** Without so much as a reason, you automatically assume that somebody's responding negatively to you. The worst part is, you don't have the facts to support your assumption. You take it as something's that absolute, with no possibility of being proven otherwise. For example, when a fellow colleague doesn't say good morning to you one fine day, you think he suddenly hates you. The truth is he was probably preoccupied with something, but you wouldn't have known since you never bothered to find out the truth.

- 9) **Emotions Overriding Facts:** You don't know it, but in your mind, you always mix feelings and emotions up with facts. You tend to entertain thoughts such as "I feel like a useless piece of trash, so I must be a piece of trash." When this happens, you go with the assumption that your feelings and emotions reflect the actual state of things. And when you use emotions to reason things, the emotions themselves become indisputable facts. Actually, since the kinds of emotions we go through are directly influenced by our thoughts, if our thoughts are warped, our emotions will be as well.

- 10) **Overgeneralizing:** Whenever we hurriedly arrive at a conclusion based on limited evidence, we've over generalized. We perceive a failure in one area to be a failure at all.

- 11) **Self Blame:** Though often with inadequate supporting facts to back us up, we assume that we are directly responsible for causing a negative event, though the actual reality may be that we had nothing to do with it. This leads to huge amounts of guilt on our part.

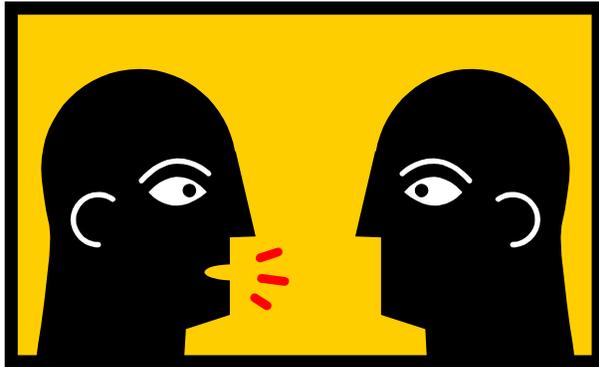
12) **Self Degradation:** You underestimate yourself and constantly trash your ego with negative self-talk. This happens when something real nasty happens and we chastise ourselves for it. For example, you'll say stuff like, "I'm dumb" or "I'm the useless person there ever was."

13) **"Should Have, Would Have, Could Have":** These are basically patterns or trains of thought that entail stuff like "should be" or "have to be" instead of the actual outcome of the real situation, or having set rules which determine how the outcome in such situations always will be, regardless of the ever changing circumstances. This leads us to feel guilt in our hearts. And when we aim such "should statements" at other people, we experience a whole range of negative emotions primarily along the lines of anger and frustration. This can destroy us from the inside out.

Cognitive distortion is in fact at the forefront of the multitude of psychotherapy methods that therapists have been trying to treat their patients with for years. It's only when we learn how to identify this type of "pessimistic thinking", that we can rebut these negative thoughts. When we go through that process repeatedly, our negative mindset will slowly but surely shrink over time and will instead be replaced with thinking that's positive and balanced in nature.



CHAPTER 2: COMBATING NEGATIVE TALK



If I told you that we talk to ourselves on a daily basis, you would probably think it was the most absurd notion you've heard all your life. Of course, I don't mean this in the literal sense, but these "talks" happen within our subconscious mind. Every time we think about something, we actually do some form of

talking in our heads about what to do.

To better understand this concept, you merely need to listen to the running commentary when watching any sporting event on television. Our self talk is similar to that. The self talk that goes on in our head is a form of running commentary that provides observation and comments on any and everything that takes place in our lives on a daily basis.

The thing to take away from this is that this self talk has huge implications for us. Our self talk can fulfill two roles, either that of a good friend who constantly stands by you and pushes you to achieve your life goals, or that of a bully that is constantly putting you down, criticizing you and kicking you when you're down for the count.

For a long time now, many psychologists have realized the importance of encouraging positive self talk when treating patients in order to help them reach their true potential. Anybody who competes with somebody for something in life, and I believe that's most of us, you probably encounter tough challenges that stand in the way of achieving your goals. These challenges could come in the form of your co-workers, boss or even circumstances. Facing such overwhelming odds, the only way for us to succeed is to possess powerful levels of self-belief as

well as determination. Positive self talk is in fact the quickest and easiest way for you to achieve success and reach your true potential.

Sadly most people almost always engage in negative instead of positive self talk. What exactly is negative self talk? Let's imagine for a second that a colleague or friend told you straight in your face, "You're a useless screw up!" What would you think or feel? What would you do? And now imagine that being your own voice, in your own head, instead of someone else's. That is negative self-talk. Chances are you probably don't need to imagine it as most if not all of us can easily identify at least several types of negative self-talk that go on inside our heads at any point in time.

Realistically speaking, an average person's negative self-talk probably sounds an awful lot like this "Wow, I'm such an idiot to think I could actually get that job. I mean, just look at how I screwed up my previous interviews."

It's like having this really critical person living inside of us, and it works by playing on our past failures while dismissing anything that sounds positive. It also sets impossible standards of perfectionism for us to reach and it makes us assume that others think of us negatively as well. These negative thoughts often vary between very mild or very mean. In order to better understand what negative self thought is, it's always helpful to think of the relationship between our feelings, thoughts and actions.

Negative thoughts are often a surefire indicator that we possess painful feelings that need to be recognized and released, such as grief and anger. While most negative thoughts can be attributed to low self esteem levels, intensely negative feelings such as apprehension, unhappiness or sorrow are experienced far more often. When this happens, our actions are far more likely to cause us to isolate ourselves from others and try to avoid new situations as much as possible.

Yet regardless of whether we choose to believe it or not, all our negative thoughts actually serve a purpose. You see, when you are particularly apprehensive about trying out something new, your thoughts tend to sound along the likes of “I can’t do this! How silly was I to even entertain the possibility that it could be done?” When this happens, we’re sure to not go ahead with it and our anxiety is relieved as a result.

This self critical voice inside of us also serves to cocoon us in a protective layer of sorts. It shields us from the elements, which in this context come in the form of rejection or failure. It’s quite possible for negative thinking to become so ingrained in us that it literally becomes a way of life. While pleasant and positive interactions during our adolescent years make positive self-talk a lot easier to contemplate when we’re grown-ups, it’s not impossible to start cultivating the habit of positive self-talk even when we’re older. Knowing what you’re thinking at any point in time is a great way to get started on your journey to positive self talk.

Above all else, it’s absolutely vital that we become skilled at recognizing our own style of self talk, and whether it’s hurting or helping us. In fact, listen to yourself right now as you’re reading this. If your mind is full of positive thoughts, great! If not, start thinking of ways to replace them with positive ones!

To help you in identifying negative or positive thoughts, consult the table below:

Negative Thoughts	Positive Thoughts
I feel really miserable	No matter how down I may feel, I thank God for each and every additional day that I have to live.
I am disgusted with my boss	I’m happy my boss treats me like a human being
I am unhappy with the state of my life	I’m glad that there’s food on the table every day
I am so fat it’s not funny anymore	I love and appreciate myself for who I am, instead of trying to be someone I clearly am not
I am emotionally fragile	I am the one who decides how I want to feel

I lack self control	Learning how to restrain myself is the first step to success
I react impulsively	I am able to control my reactions
I lose control easily	I am able to behave in a mature and responsible manner
I am unable to manage my emotions	I am in charge of my own feelings and emotion
I am useless	I accept myself for who I am
I am destined to be a failure	I am better at certain things that others aren't quite as good at
People avoid me like the plague	I feel good about myself and that's all that matters
I always get the short end of the stick in life	I take every failure as a learning experience
Failing to secure that dream job has really hurt me	I can definitely ace the next interview
I am the lousiest cook there is	I can whip up a really good meal
I was never the leader I thought myself to be	I will become a very good leader
I can never do things as well as he does	If I try hard enough, it's only a matter of time before I'll be as good as he is
I am in a highly disadvantageous position	I can turn my disadvantage into an advantage and catch my opponent by surprise
I can never get this right	I'll get it right for sure if I try hard enough

From the table above, you should have a pretty good idea of how discouraging negative thoughts sound. Do you think harboring such thoughts are going to be healthy or beneficial for you over the long run?

Do take note that the aforementioned table is just a brief guide as it would be impossible to list down all the negative and positive thoughts in existence. It also doesn't hurt to ask yourself

every once in a while if the negative thoughts are indeed reality or just figment of your imagination.

As with most things in life, being aware keeps you on the ball. And when it comes to negative thoughts, you'd want to be on the ball because you wouldn't want those negative thoughts to keep accumulating and snowball into something that's too huge and insurmountable. Negative self-talk is in many ways similar to a terminal illness. Discovering it early enables you to seek the required treatment from the outset and take the best possible precautions before it can develop into something that threatens your life.



Similarly, discover those negative thoughts early so you can replace them with positive ones before the negativity gains a foothold and takes you down for the count.

It may come as a surprise to some, but we hold power through our thoughts, which means that every single word that passes through our brain as part of the complex thought process holds immeasurable power. We are in fact defined by the words we utter and the thoughts we think. And when we engage in positive dialogues with ourselves, the way we perceive things and even the way others perceive us will change accordingly as well. You'll live life with a spring in your step and feel like there's nothing you can't do.

Research has in fact shown that optimistic people are better equipped to handle complex challenges and changes in their lives, whilst minimizing any negative impact the changes may bring onto their lives. If there was ever one golden rule you had to remember, it's to constantly engage in positive dialogue with yourself.

One of the most difficult tasks for anybody in the world is to delve further into the inner workings of their sub-conscious and be aware of what's going on inside. The first step anyone can take towards effecting a change is to gain awareness of the problems that are afflicting them.

After which, focus as much as possible on your individual self talk. Chances are you'd be shocked at how often you say really nasty stuff to yourself on a daily basis. Always know what you're thinking about. Do you know what kind of thoughts do you entertain on a daily basis? What kind of thoughts do you usually focus on? Are those happy or sad thoughts? How long do you focus on these thoughts for? What caused you to harbor such thoughts? The questions are endless.

What we can be sure of is that anything negative that comes out of our mouth is a direct consequence of us harboring negative thoughts. And if you know how our body works, once our mind has decided on something, it's impossible for the body to not comply. Despite what you may have been leaded to believe, it's not possible to control our thoughts.

In addition to the basic list of possible negative thoughts one can entertain that's been shown in the table above, here's a couple more complex negative thoughts:

- 1) Perceiving things in terms of absolutes, or what we call polarized thinking, which means seeing everything in black or white: "My boss just gave me a dressing down. He must hate my guts."**
- 2) Arriving too quickly at conclusions without enough supporting evidence or facts: "I just got into an argument with my co-worker so I need to quit."**
- 3) Believing you know what other people are thinking about you: "My friend thinks I'm ugly."**

- 4) **Keep assuming the worst is going to happen: ‘Oh no my boss is going to fire me just because I made a small mistake on my first day.’**
- 5) **Thinking everything that happens around you is a consequence of your actions or presence. “My boss is in a really bad mood today. I must be the cause of it.”**
- 6) **Labeling: “I’m useless”**

There are however ways for you to prevent these negative thoughts or self-talk from occurring:

- 1) **Identify the types of negative self talk that you engage in most of the time. Pay close attention to your thoughts and single out any thoughts that are negative in nature.**
- 2) **Establish reasons that explain why your negative thoughts are not based on actual facts, but assumption.**
- 3) **Alter your thought patterns to something that’s more in line with already established facts instead of jumping to conclusions.**
- 4) **Record down your feelings and thoughts in a journal of sorts.**



Let's talk more in detail about the above mentioned steps. There is in fact a pretty reliable way of fighting off those negative thoughts. It's finding a rational reason to explain every negative thought we have. Whenever a negative thought pops into your head, try talking to it like a friend. As much as possible, keep reminding yourself that it isn't true, and provide rational reasons to explain to yourself why it isn't true.

This is what we call the "rational response". Generating a rational response often ensures that whatever thought replaces the old negative thought is at the very least a more realistic thought instead of one that's emotionally driven or motivated. Do bear in mind that going through this process will not be easy, at least not when you're just getting started on it. Give it some time thought and it'll work out just fine. Like all things in life, practice makes perfect. Below is a really neat chart to get you started:

Negative Thought	Rational Response	New Thought
I am useless	I am not useless because I've done things in the past that only I and no other person can	While I may not be the best at everything, there are certain things that I can do much better compared to others
I feel depressed	I am not depressed because there are so many things in life worth celebrating over	While I do have my fair share of unhappy moments, I am glad to say I feel happy most of the time

*Refer to Exercise 3 of your Action Cards now, and try to come up with 3 more negative thoughts, rational responses, and new thoughts based on your life right now.

Engaging in positive self-talk and thinking means allowing things which scream positivity into your mind, such as pleasant words or happy images which will gear you towards success in life.

Once you become used to this, you'll realize that your mind looks forward and even eagerly anticipates situations which will bring about positive results, such as success, prosperity and joy. And you know that whatever our mind anticipates, it will find. By the same token, constantly harboring negative thoughts, uttering negative words or behaving in a negative fashion will almost certainly make us unhappy. Not to mention that it'll most definitely set you up for failure and frustration in life.

The moment a negative thought pops up in your head, immediately replace it with a positive thought. Doing so ensures you won't give the negative thought enough time to take root and cause a problem. If possible, try and make this a habit. It also helps to write or record down somewhere whenever negative thought



appears out of nowhere. This will allow you to evaluate your thoughts later on. Being aware at all times of what our mind is doing helps a great deal with generating positive thoughts.

There is a perfectly good reason why you should record or jot down your negative thoughts. In fact, if you can, spare the time, do up a summary of your daily thoughts. Alternatively, you could start jotting down your thoughts and feelings over any particular issue and reflect on it when you have the time.

You'll realize it's an extremely useful way of analyzing whatever it is that's going on in our brains. As the days, weeks, months or even years past, you'll slowly but surely start to notice a trend developing. The pattern is different for everyone and may or may not be obvious in some cases. The key is to look out for certain factors that may trigger those negative thoughts in us.

The one thing that everyone has in common with regards to patterns is that they don't just simply form overnight. They're basically habits that develop over time. But some people don't

just have a habit of thinking about negative things. In fact they're addicted to it. It's just like being addicted to cigarettes, or alcohol, or even drugs, and we all know how much trouble people have with kicking these habits once the addiction has reached a certain stage.

The trick is of course to keep the condition under control before it can become an addiction. Replacing a bad habit is of course not as hard as you've been lead to believe. It's often as simple as replacing it with something that's at least more uplifting and acceptable, if not exactly completely positive in nature.

You may or may not realize this, but it's often easier to think negatively instead of positively. Negative actions arise as a direct result of negative feelings and thoughts. It's like a habitual cycle that you can't get out of no matter how hard you try. And the cycle will continue until the root of the problem is identified and removed. Humans also often try too hard to be overly-positive when the actual reality is they are burdened with many unhappy thoughts and feelings. Trying to be optimistic or overly positive even when we are down in the dumps can be a very tiring thing to do. As long as the roots or causes of our negativity remain unresolved, these issues will always come back to haunt us, no matter how hard we try to erase them. It's therefore extremely pertinent that we root out all the issues that cause negative self-talk within us. Next we'll look at ways and means to effectively combat our negative thought patterns.

You see, there isn't any actual way of simply blocking out a negative thought. Trying to do will only cause more harm to you. There in fact exist ways for you to break out of this vicious and negative cycle. Instead of attempting to resist it, why not redirect it by removing the energy from the negative thought and transform it into a positive one.

As part of this process, we need to condition our mind in such a way whereby any negative thought will be instantly exchanged for a positive one. Doing this is of course not easy and requires constant practice. But with a little determination, it's quite possible to master this process. In most cases, our thoughts manifest themselves through many forms, such as visually

and audibly. If the negative thought's visual in nature, you see mental images. If it's audible, you seem to hear the voice of the enemy murmuring within you.

But regardless of the mode and form of your thought, you can engage in a process using the following steps:

1) Transform the negative thought into a mental image

Take any negative thought and paint a relevant mental picture of it. Let's say you're thinking, "I'm pretty useless." Now imagine yourself walking away from all your responsibilities in life while looking like an idiot with people all around you holding up banners and shouting "I am useless!" In fact, add more vivid details such as looking around at those people and seeing them making vulgar hand signals at you and laughing at your looks. Now imagine that this is all happening in high definition. Mere thought of it playing your head drives you mad. If you're one of those who have issues with visualizing stuff, do it using audible signals. Translate the visual scenes into audible ones that you can hear. In fact, combine both if possible.

2) Choose an empowering replacement thought

Select a thought which sounds nice to you and replace the negative thought with it. Basically it must or should motivate you in a way which takes something away from the original negative thought. There's never any potential whatsoever in negative thoughts, so instead of thinking "I'm stupid", perhaps you'd like to replace it with "I'm the smartest person in the room".



3) Transform the positive thought into a mental image

Just like Step 1, generate a series of mental images from the positive thought. Say you have this thought “I am the best looking guy there ever was”, you would probably imagine yourself dressed in a really nice tuxedo walking down a street with all the pretty ladies looking at you. As in Step 1, keep playing this scene in your head like some broken record until you it has served its desired effect of eradicating whatever previous negative image existed.

4) Link the two images together

Since you’ve now seen 2 different sets of images, think of them as being roughly equivalent to video recordings. Just for an instance, pretend that you’re the director of the movie in front of you. Follow the exact sequences in Steps 1 and 3 and attempt to mentally link them together. You can do so by trying to merge both of them together in a manner that will enable one set of images to seamlessly segue into the other.

Remember that the transition should be smooth and fast. Once you’re done merging these two sets of images, play the whole thing in your head over and over until you can see everything clearly at a moment’s notice.

5) Do a test run

If you’ve never anything that’s remotely close to this, you’re in for a real eye-opener. It might take a good few minutes for you to breeze through the whole sequence, but don’t get discouraged if it doesn’t go smoothly at first. With adequate practice, the whole sequence can effectively be done and over in a matter of seconds. Like most other mental processes, it’s a skill that you need to master over time. The main objective here of course is to for you attain mastery of this process till such an extent that it becomes a process that runs itself automatically. It must be like a gut reaction that occurs whenever a negative thought pops into your head. The negative will be the trigger and stimulus that passes a signal or message to your mind in order to kick-start the process.

Once you've reached this level, whenever you think "I'm a stupid person", you'll most definitely end up with a thought like "I am the smartest person in this room"

As has been mentioned earlier, the human mind processes information purely through visuals, instead of words. So when someone tells you "A silver tortoise", you won't see the letters "S-I-L-V-E-R" "T-O-R-T-O-I-S-E". Try and use a variety of images that describes anything, from a situation in life to even a particular object. These kinds of images are very effective in allowing you to view things from the perspective of an outsider, or third-person. As we almost always look at situations from a first person point of view, sometimes looking at it from another perspective can lead us to discover intricacies that we'd otherwise have missed.

At this point, any negative thought that enters your mind will be redirected in a different direction. It's only a matter of time before it'll be incredibly hard for your mind to generate any negative thoughts or emotions. When your mind's been conditioned till such an extent, you'll be able to effortlessly exert full control over the internal state of your mind. Once you've reached this stage, your subconscious will have full rein over your negative thoughts.



CHAPTER 3: PURIFYING YOUR MIND FROM TOXIC THOUGHTS



Human beings are able to effortlessly alter their states of mind using a certain technique called “linking”. Doing so enables us to be in complete control of our emotions, even in the direst of circumstances when everybody else seems to be trying their utmost best to get on your nerves. This is possible through linking all the different states of your mind so that a link is

formed which enables to reach the state you desire immediately.

All the cognitive processes that occur in our minds on a daily basis are directed responses to specific events. Certain responses are usually linked to particular thinking patterns. The actual linking itself isn’t a hard thing to do but it’s definitely one of the more important aspects of everything we do. What this means is that we can freely manipulate the process of linking our different thoughts as it’s done naturally. Doing so also enables our mind to function more efficiently.

Many of our thought processes and the emotions that result from them become a habit over time. A habit forms whenever you behave or act the same way time and again over an extended period of time. By the same token, certain responses we generate can be considered as habits as well. Even things such as believing in our strengths and weaknesses can be considered habits.

Links between our thoughts determine our behavior in various ways, such as whether we’re in a good or bad mood. We are responding to links most of the time, yet we often don’t know what those links are. These links are formed both consciously and sub-consciously as a result of our experiences in life. It’s no surprise that most people think their state of think has nothing to do

with themselves and that mood swings occur on a totally random basis with no discernible patterns. That couldn't be further from the truth as humans do indeed possess the ability to generate a particular state of mind according to our desires.

Examples could be when we breeze through a job interview confidently or calmly address an audience as a speaker. The whole range of emotions that we often go through, such as happiness, sadness or anger can be managed easily by us. So nobody but you dictates how you feel or think. This also means you can instantly turn on all the motivation you'll ever need to achieve anything in life.

There are several ways for you to remove an unpleasant or negative state of mind, and these are shown below:

- 1) Isolate whatever negative or un-needed thought, feeling or emotion that you want to be rid of.**
- 2) Generate a link for this particular state of mind by locating a trigger point at an easily locatable area, such as the nail on your thumb for instance.**
- 3) Try not to have anything to do with the process, even if it's for just a split second by switching to another activity. Doing so will cause this state of mind to be isolated from the next. This will ensure the different states of visualization are kept separate.**
- 4) Create another link that triggers an enviable state or feeling. Try to activate this trigger point by way of either tapping your knuckle or your forefinger. Know that you have adequate resources to achieve whatever it is you want in life. If you so desire, recall any past memories which you've previously experienced a state in which you held all the resources. If required, recall as many as possible so that your link receives**

the optimal level of benefit. Stacking a few of them helps as a group of sticks that are tied together will not break so easily compared to one single stick.

5) Just calm down for a second or two to ensure your mind's cleared.

6) Tap your thumbnail as show in step 2 in order to trigger the unwanted behavior. Wait a few seconds and tap the knuckle of your forefinger in order to activate the second unwanted behavior. Press them for between 10 to 15 seconds while they swell and subsequently, fade. Following this, remove the first and after that, the second. If you experience some form of confusion, don't be alarmed because it's just the effect of the conflicting links colliding together with each other. Due to the fierce intensity of the desired state of mind, the unwanted behavior will be overridden instantly.

7) Now just imagine a random situation sometime in the future when the unwanted behavior occurs and take note of the positive or happy feelings you're experiencing now.



Fear no more because as and when the unwanted event occurs in your life, you just need to trigger the new link you've just created using the steps above. So just tap the knuckle of your forefinger to trigger this link when confronted with nerve wracking situations in life such as presenting a report or giving a speech.

Always bear in mind that there are six fundamental aspects that need to be fulfilled in order for linking to be at its most effective:

- 1) The intenseness of the state of your emotions or minds: How powerful the link is will depend purely on the intenseness of your state of mind.**
- 2) Expectations are a key aspect in determining whether your link will work or not. If you think a link will work, it will for sure. If not, it simply won't.**
- 3) The link's appropriateness**
- 4) Unique traits possessed by the stimulus, inclusive of the number of type of sense being used (visual, auditory etc)**
- 5) The intensity of the stimulus must vary along with the intensity of the state. Initially the stimulus should ideally be applied at the peak of the intensity level and should be removed when the state itself peaks.**
- 6) The rate at which you consistently change the trigger point, or stimulus for a new one in order to avoid repetition.**

In trying to alter our thinking styles, the restructuring of our thoughts is a vital process whereby we choose to engage ourselves in rebutting distortions in our thinking, such as "faulty" or "negative" thinking in an attempt to substitute these irrational and counter-productive beliefs with more positive and beneficial ones. Our own impractical beliefs are directly responsible for causing dysfunctional emotions or feelings as well as the behaviors that result from them, like depression, anxiety, pressure, trauma, tension and various others, so many in fact that the list could theoretically go on forever.

Yet as we restructure our thoughts, we gain the ability to eradicate such emotions and thus nullify their effects through altering the beliefs that give rise to them in the first place. Highly irrational thoughts such as "All my friends should love and adore me", "I should be the richest

person in the world because I deserve it!", "I must be the best at everything!" give rise to incongruence between our real-self and ideal self.

Cognitive re-structuring will most definitely helps us to switch out such illogical beliefs and replace them with more realistic ones, such as "I'm imperfect so I will fail at times" or "I don't need to be the best at everything". By learning how to revise our thinking habits, we can more constructively rework the way we think and feel.

Greg Frost