

CHAPTER ONE

THE POWER OF POSITIVE CHANGE
STARTS WITH YOUR THOUGHTS

How to Change Your Life Starts With Your Thoughts. Fact: The way you think about yourself determines your reality. Why do I say this? Well, I know it to be true in my own life, from past and present experience, and I've seen it played out in the lives of countless others.

As Henry Ford said, "Whether you think you can, or that you can't, you are usually right."

It is also just how our subconscious mind works. You see, your subconscious mind accepts every thought or perception you have as fact. Then it begins to look for evidence to support these "facts." Your subconscious mind will create evidence by prompting you to make choices that support what you think. If you think you can do something, your mind will look for ways that gives you the evidence necessary to believe your thoughts are possible. But if you think you can't do it, your mind will hold back and even sabotage you to prove that you were right in the first place. In other words, what you think is what you get.

It's the same with life in general. Your perceptions are the driving force of your life. If you perceive things to be difficult and defeating, then you will surely struggle, because you've created a negative expectation that will filter out any positive opportunities. And if you perceive things to be working out perfectly and just the way you intended, you will find that you have more than enough energy to stay the course while enjoying the ride, because your positive expectation will filter out the negative stumbling blocks. There might be challenges, but you will overcome them, because you believe you can.

So what do you think about yourself? And what do you think about the world around you?

If you're not sure, think about what your current experience of life is. It will be an excellent clue.

Every choice you've ever made in life has brought you to where you are now. Just as every choice you make in the future will either keep you here or move you on, because every choice and action is based on a thought, or a way of thinking. You can't act without deciding to, whether consciously or unconsciously. It is how you think about yourself and your life that creates your reality.

And what if your reality is not what you ideally want? Then change it!

“We are like magnets: like attracts like. You become AND attract what you think.” — *The Secret*

What is the Law of Attraction?

Whatever your life experience is right now is a result of all your thoughts up to this point in time. The story you tell about your life — your physical, and financial health, your body shape, size and flexibility; your work environment; your relationships, how others treat you; your happiness or unhappiness is created in your words and thoughts. The world around you, all of your circumstances, is a reflection of your thoughts. *You get what you expect! So expect the best!*

There is no such thing as a coincidence!

Every thought has a frequency. Ever hear of brain waves? That is your conscious and subconscious thought impulses of your brain. Your thoughts send out a magnetic energy attracting people, and events, that are in a similar or complementary thought frequency.

The problem is that most people spend too much time thinking about what they do not want and attract more of the same.

People who say, “people always ignore me or don’t like me...” will attract more people that do not like them. We are in control of our circumstances because our thoughts attract what we think and we have the power to change what we think about and attract circumstances that are more desirable.

We all make choices to think in a negative or positive way. It is up to you which choice you make. Even not making a choice is making a choice. When you *see* positive things happening in your mental images, positive things will begin to happen for you. Positive thoughts and mental images are just one key to unlock happiness — an important key.

...a man sooner or later discovers that he is the master gardener of his soul, the director of his life. He also reveals, within himself, the laws of thought and understands how the thought forces and mind elements operate in shaping his character, circumstances and destiny. The things we love and fear that most tend to occupy our thoughts much of the time, are the things we remember.

— James Allen, from, *As a Man Thinketh*

If you have decided to experiment with positive thinking, let me warn you, depending on your commitment to be truly positive it may work out like what happens when most people diet. I think most people would agree that *diets* do not really work; but eating lifestyle changes do. You might lose weight while you are dieting, but the minute you go back to your old ways of eating the pounds you lost will come back.

It is the same way with the decision to change ones thinking. It is a choice one has to make for a lifetime, leaving negativity far behind.

In the human body, thought waves travel through the body on neural pathways, it is like the electrical current that travels on wiring. Each new

thought creates new neural pathways to carry out the thought. Once you shut down a particular way of thinking you may struggle with the old thoughts; because though you are trying to change the thinking, the neural pathways are still there. Sometimes it is as if those neural pathways fire up with the same old thought energy just out of habit.

Uncovering your Fear

The dominant thought or mindset when we are unhappy is fear. We may not readily distinguish the mindset as fear, but fear is at the root of all negative emotions.

Fear can paralyze us, destroy our self-confidence, creates confusion and chaos. When a person is stuck in fear it affects their ability to think, react and feel their true emotions. Of all the feelings, fear is the one that is most debilitating. I knew a young man who was on his way to becoming a very successful lawyer. When it came time for him to take the bar exam he was paralyzed with fear of failure. My friend expected to fail, couldn't eat, couldn't sleep, was isolated from others, became depressed, lost his focus to concentrate and was manifesting failure to happen. Without a doubt he took the bar three times before passing it. On the other hand, John Kennedy Jr. failed the bar exam twice, it was in the news, and because of who he was, it was a big story across the country. However, it was evident that it didn't affect his self esteem, his drive, his zest for life, or his focus, and therefore gave him the confidence and ability to pass the test the third time.

Discovering the thoughts and feelings that create our unhappiness is the key to joy and freedom. We lose our authenticity by pretending to be the person we think we "should be."

We are actors in our lives pretending to cover up what we think are our deficits when in reality they may be our assets.

We cover up our fears by becoming people pleasers so others will accept us, love us, or hire us.

People don't like to talk about their fears and insecurities. The emotion of fear is subtle and often mislabeled so that one doesn't realize its presence. Only a courageous analysis would uncover this universally pervasive enemy.

As a Life Coach, I help my clients to recognize fearful mindsets and thought processes that literally make it impossible to face life's challenges as a happy person. The following thought processes are major obstacles in our lives.

What causes us to be indecisive? It's much more than simply not making a decision. It creates confusion, and turmoil in our lives. Not making a decision is making a decision to not decide. By not making up your own mind, you give the power to someone or some other circumstance to make it for you.

What does it mean when people respond to a question by saying "I don't care where we eat, what we do, where we go...?" What they feel is no passion for life, a lack of enthusiasm and perhaps, being mentally and physically lazy.

Doubt has a direct line to worry. The thought process of doubt is about lack of confidence and unresolved fear from the past. Often doubt is expressed as criticism of someone else's success, as a way to cover up for one's own lack of self-confidence. Let's talk about doubt and worry. Worry is the pain and agony of imaging "your worst case scenarios"..Some of these situations are realistic and some are imaginary created from fearful thought patterns. Worry is the habit of looking for the negative in every circumstance. It is the act of thinking and talking about failure instead of concentrating on being successful. If you have a strong sense of self, believe in your abilities and envision success, then success will find you.

The final enemy of success is procrastination. This is the habit of putting off until tomorrow that which you could have done today, yesterday or last year. Procrastinators spend their time creating alibis and refusing to accept their responsibilities. Instead of using their difficulties as stepping-stones to find their answers, they retreat and, without a doubt, create feelings of failure. Doubt, worry, and being overly cautious are all cousins to procrastination.

These are just a few of the fear-based thought processes that I ask my clients to identify and eliminate. I ask my clients to pay particular attention to their automatic thoughts, the ones that they unconsciously think, and to challenge the logic of their negative thinking.

They find that many of the thoughts they have been thinking are not only, not true but are completely illogical.

I once heard a story of a man who took his little boy fishing along the banks of a river. The father and son got their gear set up and noticed another angler nearby. The little boy watched the other fisherman pull fish out of the river, measure it up against his forearm. If it was smaller than a forearm he would toss the fish in a big cooler, but if the fish were longer, the fisherman would throw the fish back in the water.

After several minutes of watching this, the puzzled little boy asked his dad, “Why does that man keep the small fish and throw back the big ones?”

The dad said, “I don’t know, let’s ask him.”

When the boy and his dad asked the man why he threw the big fish back, his reply was, “Because I only have a 10” frying pan.” Some people live their lives like that man with “measured” thinking. If life does not happen to fit their “measurements”, they through “opportunity” back in the water because there could not possibly be another way but the

way they have always done things or thought about things. How many opportunities do our narrow thoughts keep us from enjoying? A thought repeated is eventually accepted as truth, believed by the habitual playing of the thought repeatedly in one's mind.

An important thing to note is that this process of changing ones thinking is more than simply inserting a bunch of positive affirmations into your daily routine. The changes in your life will become a reality when you challenge the negative thought processes. Training of your new thoughts must begin right away. The old thought processes even once challenged and proven untrue and illogical still will try to slip back in like a bad habit.

Remember at the beginning of this chapter I said, "The world around you — all of your circumstances — is a reflection of your thoughts." Let's expand on this idea. The world around you — all of your circumstances — is a reflection of the thoughts of your family and friends that you have embraced during your life.

Many of us can almost hear our parents saying,

"You better eat everything on your plate, there are starving children that would love to have what you throw away." And, "Money doesn't grow on trees."

We hear these statements now even though the people that said them to us might be no longer living.

We inherit small, stuck thinking because our parents, siblings, or spouse has small thinking.

We allow the energy of their words and thoughts bring down our thinking. When we think small and negative long enough, that way of thinking becomes a belief, and a part of who we are.

Have you ever heard yourself say, “That’s just the way I am?” If you are willing to experience the power of positive change, you can think and be different. A different way of thinking will change your circumstances and create a happier, more enjoyable life.

Self-talk: The Conversation Inside: What is that little voice inside your head telling you?

Self-talk or your “inner voice” determines how you perceive every situation. Our self-talk gives voice to our inner values and beliefs. Our self-talk becomes the ‘script’ of the life we lead; the running commentary in our heads about the world we live in. Nothing in your life happens without some internal thought, comment, or evaluation.

If you’re stressed out, depressed or anxious , there’s a good chance that your self-talk is fueling how you feel. When you experience these negative emotions pay attention to your self-talk.

“I’m not smart enough.”

“Why do I bother, my family doesn’t appreciate what I do.”

“I can’t do that, I won’t even try.”

“This is too hard. I can’t take it anymore.”

Be conscious to change the language (the words) you use. You would be surprised the importance of communication and how changing one word can change the meaning of what you are thinking or saying.

Whatever your self-talk is, you’ve probably heard it all your life. Much of the self-talk that goes on inside may have been planted in your thinking by something someone said to you — a parent, a teacher, a boss, or a friend. After years of continuously thinking about words carelessly spoken, they have become a part of your personality. Can you begin to see the importance of words and how they affect your thinking, feeling and actions?

Everyone has an internal monologue. The good news is that you can learn to manage your self-talk and choose a more positive and productive perspective to have about yourself and your environment. For example:

Situation: Your children have all reached the age that they're old enough to move out to live on their own or go off to college.

Scenario One: Your thoughts could be filled with negative self-talk and filled with fear of abandonment or exclusion.

Self-Talk:

- “Now what? I have been a mom for all these years. I don't know what to do with myself.
- “My kids have no use for me anymore. They have their own lives and they don't include me.”

Emotions:

- Sadness
- Useless
- Lack of ambition
- Loneliness

Action:

- Call children to make them feel guilty for not calling or visiting more often
- Spend time doing time wasting, non-productive activities

Scenario Two: You could have a much more optimistic perspective and probably attract your grown children to stay close or at least readily communicate with you even though they've moved out.

Self-Talk:

- “I have great kids! What a great job I've (we've) done.”
- “Now I am looking forward to investing my time into worthwhile pursuits”
- “I am so proud of them and happy about their accomplishments”

Emotions:

- Personal Satisfaction
- Inspiration
- Positive Imagination
- Happiness

Action:

- Call children to support their productive lives and encourage them
- Invest time in productive activities and new worthy goals

I realize this is a very simplistic description of a complex relationship between parent and adult children, but hopefully, you can see the natural progression of either the positive or negative mindset. What I want you to understand is that you are in control of your mind.

No one can control what you think. You alone grant control on how you will allow situations or people to influence your thinking. Your emotional state of mind is always a direct result of your thinking and you will always act and behave in accordance with your thinking and feeling.

In the movie “Life is Beautiful”, Roberto Benigni accomplishes the impossible in his story about his life during World War II. He creates a fantasy game for his son to believe during the tragedy of the Holocaust. When the Nazis ship the men off to a concentration camp during World War II he is determined to shelter his son from the evils around them and convinces him they’re in an elaborate contest to win, of all things, a tank. Guido (the father) keeps this way of thinking, even as the horrors escalate and people are being killed all around him — all the more impetus to keep his son safe, secure and, most of all, hidden. “Life Is Beautiful” is a moving story of one father’s sacrifice to save not just his young son’s life but his innocence in the face of one of the most evil acts ever perpetrated by the human race.

— Sean Axmaker

Once you become aware of and pay attention to your self-talk, you can begin to make choices about the inner conversation you allow yourself to have. Just because you've been telling yourself that you're a slow learner or that you're stupid or that no one likes you doesn't make it true, even if you've been telling yourself that for a long time.

Awareness of your thoughts is just the first step. Next you must analyze your thinking.

Challenge your negative self talk and replace it with a new perspective. Instead of "I can't do anything right!" you can choose to say to yourself, "keep trying, keep learning, you'll master this if you don't give up."

Once you are aware of your self-talk and you evaluate it for truth, you can intentionally develop new things to speak to yourself with your inner voice. Changing your self-talk to more positive words and statements is not enough. It is important to challenge and eliminate the lies you have been telling yourself. You will not be effective by having the positive statements mingled in with the negative self-talk.

Do not be discouraged if your negative self-talk keeps trying to repeat itself, remember, it takes time to break old habits. With time and repetition of the new and more positive choices for self-talk you will make progress. That is how the mind works.

**LIVE BY THE LAW OF ABUNDANCE
NOT BY THE LAW OF SCARCITY!**

Thank you for reading this unedited sample chapter of Janie Behr's inspiring book, *Paint Your Wall Green: 6 Keys to Unlock the Power of Positive Change*.

Janie would love to hear your impressions of the book and would also like to invite you to take advantage of her free, one-hour, life coaching seminar.

**For more information visit:
<http://www.jblifecoach.com>**

Janie
Behr