

Lesson 82: The Path to Cognitive, Emotional and Spiritual Maturity

Series Six: How Changing Your Mind Can Change Your Life

You may not be aware that a neurological process is set in motion every time you change your mind, regardless of how trivial the change may be. This process involves a great deal of complex electrochemical impulses that are activated in your brain, such as the firing of neurons or the creation of new neurons that send encoded signals from neuron to neuron, via synapses, which in turn sends signals to certain cells as well as to various organs in your body. Changing your mind not only involves neurological processes; it also sets biological processes in motion which activates emotional, behavioral and physiological changes. Because changing your mind is a subjective experience, it can adversely affect how you perceive and respond to external and internal stimuli, which in turn affects the quality of your personal experiences, especially when unwelcomed events in your life throw you off balance and render you incapable of perceiving the event as it really is. But more importantly, it is not so much about how you perceive the event, as it is more about how you perceive yourself as the result of the event.

Unfortunately, the frailties of the human condition are such that the ability to see things as they really are can be difficult and quite challenging to say the least. Subjective perceptions can throw you into an adverse reactionary state of mind, resulting in a cognitive impairment that can put you at psychological risk in ways you may not be aware of and that can eventually lead to serious medical problems. The discussion in this sixth series is intended to not only encourage you to see the benefits of changing your mind, but to help you understand how changing your mind can change the quality of your life experiences, which supports emotional and spiritual maturity.

In the course of your life, you are prone to changing your mind in response to an endless stream of environmental and other external stimuli and even your own internal influences. Although there are external stimuli or environmental influences that do not have a negative impact on your reality, there are those that do. The way you mentally and emotionally process undesirable or unfavorable events corresponds to your feelings which corresponds to a thought, which corresponds to a perception, which corresponds to a belief, which corresponds to a behavior, which in turn results in physiological reactions such as the release of the stress hormone cortisol or the fight or flight response that occurs in response to stressful stimuli that is activated by the sympathetic nervous system. Additional physiological responses such as an increase in heart and respiration rates, secretion of adrenaline, the release of endorphins, as well as digestive malfunctions can become troublesome or problematic when they threaten your health and well-being. Long term undiagnosed or improperly diagnosed physiological responses can lead to psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety, panic attacks, insomnia, loss of appetite or obesity, substance abuse, fear or social phobias, in addition to the onset of medical problems such as lower back pain, migraines, chronic fatigue,

insomnia, hypertension and a host of other undesirable disorders that eventually lead to more serious medical conditions.

The cognitive path to understanding the mental and emotional affects from external influences that may have negatively affected your reality begins by examining how you psychologically responded to the event at the time it occurred, and even more so is to examine how you may still be adversely responding to that event. Generally speaking, these experiences often have their roots in your childhood, but they can also be traced back to more recent events in your life. It is not surprising to find that recent events can be mapped directly back to a childhood event. Although a past event cannot be changed, you are always empowered to change the psychological effects that were triggered by the event, which can be accomplished by changing your mind. However, the act of changing your mind is not that simple because the psychological effects are not always easily identified as being connected to a particular event anymore than the physiological effects are easily connected to the psychological effects without some degree of intervention. Thus, the process of peeling back the layers of cause and effect is necessary as a viable means to get to the root of the problem which is generally connected to a well embedded core belief that has been responsible for the psychological and physiological effects more so than the actual event. Once the core belief has been exposed, the act of changing your mind becomes a goal that can be accomplished, but the change relies on your willingness to view your circumstances from a different perspective, which also requires a change in your feelings and your established thought patterns, along with the need to reexamine your expectations and the cultivation of enabling beliefs – which is no easy feat.

Sometimes it is hard to discern the existence of an underlying disabling core belief, let alone to discern how it became stored in your subconscious mind and consequently established in your brain, because the belief itself is often buried under a great deal of mental and emotional debris. So the process of getting to the root cause, in an attempt to reveal the underlying and often undetected core belief, requires sifting through the mental and emotional debris, as well as to take into consideration the unpleasant physiological effects. The connection to an undesirable and unwelcomed event sometimes involves a bottom up approach because the event that contributed to the psychological upheaval is not always central to your awareness, to the extent that you have not connected your responsive behaviors to a particular event. In this case, the best approach in the way of self-help is to start at the bottom and work your way up. The process would naturally have to begin with the examination of your feelings, in terms of how you feel about yourself and how you feel about certain aspects of your environment that you perceive has been adversely affected. From there you can begin to explore your feelings as they pertain to the formation of your thoughts, which especially includes those thoughts that are automatically triggered in response to your environment, whether perceived or real; the distinction can be made at a later date. As

you make your way up the cognitive ladder in successive steps, you will eventually understand how your perceptions are feeding your feelings and your thoughts and how they in turn are feeding the underlying core belief which eventually leads back to the event itself. The process of self-discovery with respect to unraveling the adverse affects from an unwelcomed and undesirable event in your life maps to the understanding that your reactions to the event was first generated by your initial feelings, supported by your thoughts and perceptions about the situation and then was further backed up with a related belief. Over time, the newly formed belief was transferred from your conscious awareness and was firmly planted in your subconscious where it became an established core belief. You learned how to unconsciously react to this core belief habitually, which is why it can be so difficult to detect its presence. In addition to the formation of your core belief, there was also a certain way that you perceived the event, as well as a certain way that you perceived yourself and anyone else involved, including any places or things related to the event. The reality that you experience in response to the event is further generated by the images that you continue to construct in your mind. These are not the same images such as your memory of the event or when you have flashbacks of the event. These are the mental constructs you form in your mind that visually represent how you view yourself functioning in your environment. These images support what you feel, think and believe is true about yourself and others who affect your personal environment.

Adverse reactions to an undesirable event have a domino-like mental and emotional effect because you are no longer dealing with the affects from the event itself, but now you are dealing with the affects from your own internal influences. Once you get caught up in the confusion of your own internal influences, cognitive distinctions become less and less definable, as one negative influence coheres with the other, as feelings feed more thoughts and thoughts feed more feelings; just as beliefs feed perceptions and perceptions feed beliefs. The combination of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and perceptions feeds into one another and together they set the stage for what you expect from yourself and from others, whether realistic or unrealistic. Say for example, someone made you feel badly about yourself at some point along the path of your life and did so in a very hurtful and damaging way. Whether this was an actual event or was a perceived event is neither here nor there at this point of your self-discovery, this is matter that can be determined later on, after the mental and emotional debris is cleared sufficient enough to explore the reality or the illusion of the event itself. What is really important at this juncture of your journey is to focus your energy on how you are reacting to the event because this is where you become empowered to change your mind, and therefore, you change your life.

To summarize the flow of this discussion so far is to reiterate that some undesirable and unwelcomed event occurred in your life which you have mentally and emotionally processed on the level of your understanding and degree of acceptance. You reacted to

your perception of the event first in your feeling center and then in your thoughts. In addition to your feelings and thoughts, you formed a mental construct in your mind. You created an image of yourself and your environment, including how you perceive the influence of others who are interacting with your environment. Because you continue reacting to these images more so unconsciously than you do consciously, it is necessary to turn the focus of your attention on these images because these self-constructed mental images are helping to maintain what just might be a very erroneous and disabling core belief, not to mention the fact that these images are feeding the negative flow of your feelings and thoughts. The desire to change your mind can be very hard to act on, realistically speaking, if you are not even aware of how the images you formed in your mind, in response to a past or recent event, and with the help of your perceptions, are supporting your feelings and thoughts as well as your core belief and are even affecting your expectations. In addition, the event may have left you with the sense that the whole of your reality or aspects of it are now a permanent condition, as if these conditions have been indelibly written in your psyche and can never be changed or altered. This assumption is inaccurate and is cognitively, emotionally and behaviorally dysfunctional and very limiting with respect to your potential present and future experiences. Even though the event has been recorded in your memory bank, as are the thoughts, feelings, beliefs and perceptions associated with the memory of the event, neither the event nor its mental and emotional attachments are as indelible as you may be inclined to think they are. The fact of the matter is that the mental and emotional affects from the event can be cognitively examined so as to bring them to the surface where you can actually see them for what they really are, as opposed to seeing them for what they appear to be, which is quite different when you take into consideration how your perceptions are affecting your current and even your future reality far more than the event itself.

Another successive step along your path of self-discovery is to understand that once you have established a particular thought pattern in response to an undesirable event, there are associated behaviors that go hand in hand, that will dictate a host of undesirable outcomes if these behaviors are not cognitively addressed. Over time, these behaviors become well established response patterns that turn into unconscious habitual knee-jerk responses. These repetitious responses are crucial to your well-being because they do produce some very uncomfortable physiological effects. Physical fatigue results when the demands from the external and internal stress exceed your natural capability to cope. Fatigue contributes to a host of other undesirable effects such as the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness, sadness and loss of enthusiasm which inevitably extinguishes the hope of any desirable future outcomes, now perceived as being unrealistic. Such a mental and emotional loss of hope implies the need to give up on something you wish to achieve or experience because you are of the false belief that such successes are out of your reach, when in fact they may not be. There are dangerous

mental pitfalls you can easily fall into if you perceive yourself as being a failure or as not being worthy enough to succeed in a desired endeavor. This is why it is essential that you not only examine your responses, but that you test the validity of the core belief that is associated with your thoughts, feelings, perceptions and expectations.

Exploring how you are still responding to that initial event is well worth the time and effort required to embark on a very important journey of self-discovery, and one that will not only help you to change your mind, but will help you to reprogram your brain, which is where your empowerment really lies. Once you begin to understand that thought patterns do not work on their own accord but that they are directly linked to your feelings, beliefs, perceptions and expectations, as well as your sense of self-worth and self-esteem, you can begin to examine how each of these internal influences, triggered by an external stimuli, are jointly affecting your behavior and are, of course, limiting the quality of your experiences and are undermining your efforts as well.

The good news is that the power to change these debilitating experiences is not entirely out of your control. Holding onto this most erroneous and disabling belief is a sure way to leave the outcome of certain desirable experiences to manifest in the most undesirable ways. These days, you have more than sufficient information at your disposal that is available from every possible medium, this website included, to help you sort out the conditions of your own life, to recognize your own mental and emotional obstacles and to learn how to overcome them by the application of cognitive processes, that with enough time and practice will lead to your own personal freedom. But this level of mental, emotional and spiritual freedom comes by way of changing or altering your own thinking patterns which in turn changes or alters your existing brain patterns. Every thought you have, regardless of its significance, writes a command to your brain, no different than writing a command to a hard drive. Your brain then determines to what extent it needs to react or respond, taking into consideration the intent and the energy of the thought, which your brain measures by degrees on an internal neurological scale that ranges from very strong to very weak, and of course, regulates everything in between. Thus the stronger your thoughts are the more intense is your energy and the stronger are your intentions; therefore, desirable or undesirable results are manifested much quicker.

The more your brain keeps writing over the same thinking patterns, the more those patterns become embedded in your brain and the faster it habitually reacts in sending out the necessary signals to all the rest of your body. Because these signals correspond to the direction that your mental and emotional pendulum primarily swings, it is imperative that you awaken to the fact that since you are capable of manifesting undesirable results by your own strong intentions, along with the equally intense energy you attach to those intentions via your thoughts, feelings, beliefs, perceptions and expectations, you are no less cognitively equipped to manifest desirable results because

the principle works exactly the same way each and every time. You simply cannot expect to produce desirable results when you have habitually programmed your brain to do the complete opposite.

As this series was not intended to become a scientific detailed explanation of how your brain works in conjunction with your mind, but perhaps will be addressed in a future series or lesson, it was intended to take an intellectual approach to how it is that when you change your mind, you change your life and the reasons why. It is essential to your well-being to understand just how empowered you really are to make better choices and decisions once you have peeled back the layers that were hiding the real reasons for your habitual reactions to an undesirable and unwelcomed event in your life. It is equally essential for you to understand how the structure of your thoughts, the intensity of your feelings, the beliefs you hold with respect to any condition in your life, whether past or present and how you perceive those conditions directly affects what you do or do not expect from yourself or others. When you take the time to examine your current state of mind, to consider your current patterns of thinking with respect to your past and current circumstances, you can begin to see the role your own beliefs, perceptions and expectations are playing. As you continue to look deeper, to venture below the surface of your conscious awareness, you cannot help but to see how all these internal influences are working in tandem to form your reality such as it currently is and will be, if left to its own devices.

You are far more equipped to figure these things out for yourself, but sometimes, the journey of self-discovery needs a little intervention to help shed light on the areas that are hidden in the darkened confines of your mind. But as you search these things out, do not allow yourself to get tripped up where your ego and free will are concerned, because they are no less conditioned than you have been conditioned by environmental and other external stimuli. Although your ego and your will may protest to a voluntary excursion into the depths of your mind, eventually they will become willing participants once there is sufficient evidence that there are no potential threats to their survival. The fact that your ego and your will have already been conditioned by your personal, social and cultural environment does not mean they cannot be re-conditioned to act responsibly on your behalf. It's all about reprogramming your mind, your ego and your will in successive cognitive steps.

Given that such mental issues as feeling incompetent, not good enough, not smart enough, etc., etc., are generally at the core of most problems in life, these commonly experienced examples serve as a good point of reference from which to begin to build a contrast as it pertains to your own personal experiences. If as a child, someone who really was unknowing, even though they appeared to be knowledgeable at the time, caused you to feel that you were academically, vocationally or professionally incompetent, keeping in mind how this example pertains to your own personal

experience, this debilitating event may have left you in doubt as to the validity of your own self-worth. The residual might be that you felt, and perhaps still feel undeserving of the realization of a dream or a goal you would have like to achieve and maybe still desire to achieve. Taking this personalized concept a step further, it may be that perhaps your childhood experience left you frozen in your path, afraid to take the first step toward realizing your dreams or achieving your goals. It may be that any measure of personal success, in your estimation, lies way outside of your perceived ability to bring the successes you desire to life, let alone to be daring or bold enough to pursue any of them. You may be feeling, unjustifiably, unworthy of even thinking about your dreams or the goals you wish to achieve, much less to act on them. In such a scenario as this, there is a core belief, whether known or unknown, that backs up every thought you have with respect to feeling incompetent. So as long as you continue to view yourself as actually being incompetent, you will also continue to hold tight to every internal influence attached to this one core belief, and that will become your most central mindset. If left unexplored, this conditioned mindset will become a destructive mental and emotional energetic force that will dictate the quality of your life experiences. You have only to look about the conditions and circumstances you have already encountered to see the evidence for yourself, but to be objectively successful in this mental and emotional endeavor, you must be willing to observe yourself as an outsider, as if you were witnessing a scenario other than your own.

You do not have to sink down into the muck and mire of the human condition, because it is just that – it is a condition that has been adversely affect by external influences, backed by your internal thoughts, feelings, emotions, beliefs, perceptions and expectations, all of which constitutes your mental state of mind. The truth is that very few conditions in life are permanent. Most conditions are only a temporary reflection of your current reality. And even if an undesirable event is rooted in a past experience, the condition itself can be re-conditioned to one that is much more favorable and desirable. A disbelief in your ability to change the debilitating effects from a past or more recent event is your own self-imposed mental obstacle that will leave you in the grips of its ongoing negative effects. To maintain an attitude of denial is even worse, as this destructive state of mind will surely keep you entrenched in the ongoing and needless mental and emotional suffering, that ultimately keeps you locked into an unfounded attitude of self-righteousness or self-sacrificing. If you say you cannot change yourself or your circumstances, let alone to change your mind, you are erroneously holding onto a self-imposed limiting thought and very disabling belief, as there is always something that can be changed in any circumstance. But the change must first exist in your mind because this is the point of origin where you begin to create a change in your reality. Your mind is the initial starting point to bringing about any course of change. Sometimes changing your mind can be accomplished by changing your perspective, which you are more easily apt to do once you allow yourself to see that there is another

perspective other than the one you have been viewing yourself and your environment from all along, which all by itself is very liberating. Such a voluntary mental exercise opens the door wide to many new opportunities, as well as potential personal and spiritual growth.

In closing, it is our hope that you have gained a much better perspective on how changing your mind changes your life, as well as to know how changing your mind can be accomplished in successive cognitive-based steps, that when broken down into smaller segments are easier to process and integrate, as opposed to tackling the whole of an undesirable and unwelcome event in one fell swoop, which is an emotionally overwhelming and mentally taxing experience to say the least and risks being counter-productive. As this series was somewhat limited in its content, due to the necessity of not exceeding the duration of a typical lesson, please feel free to ask questions, share your thoughts, comments or personal experiences.

Many Blessings,

Linda, Z and the Collective We

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