



GREAT NEWS

Welcome to the early summer edition of Great News and 'hello' to all of our regular readers.

Did you know that what you focus on grows? We each have thousands of thoughts each day - some are helpful and others hinder us.

This edition of Great News includes a section on how to focus your thoughts so that you influence the experiences you have - useful for anyone who finds themselves fighting that inner negative chat.

We also have a story from a Cherokee Indian, and news about a mini workshop on flexible working coming up in July.

- Fiona

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What you focus on grows

In relationships, business and all aspects of life, what you focus on grows. Therefore by learning how to focus your thoughts appropriately, you will influence the experiences you have and the quality of your life. This article will give examples and principles to explain how.

During our coaches' last conference call we were discussing the fact that sometimes people going through divorce waste energy by having bitter or

jealous thoughts towards their ex, instead of using their thoughts to shape a better future for themselves.

(When they change their thoughts they will move on faster and with a happier frame of mind. We were considering various ways to help people get this concept).

It got me thinking about how powerful or debilitating our thoughts can be in so many aspects of our life. Over the course of the weekend I reflected on my own situation and a challenge I have been facing. Also, at a talk I learned of a new incredibly useful way to categorise our thoughts, which I will share with you too.

Firstly, let's consider some situations...

In business and career coaching, we sometimes encounter people who expend lots of energy worrying about things, or have negative thoughts about if they can achieve things or whether they are good enough. Our role is to challenge the assumptions they have about these thoughts and help them to choose more helpful ones.

In many relationships, people can get the wrong end of the stick and one misinterprets what another intended. Someone can then respond emotionally with anger, resentment, defensiveness or defiance. The alternative is that they could choose to take a step back and check the situation and the assumptions they've made or simply choose to give the other person the benefit of the doubt. In so doing, they create a more positive response in themselves and towards the other person.

With physical aspects of our life we can each focus on what we have and can appreciate, or we can dwell on what we don't have or can't have; whether it's a house, a car, our diet or an aspect of our appearance.

For example, at the moment I am following the anti-Candida diet to starve the infection that has taken over my gut (we all have Candida albicans bacteria in our body but taking antibiotics, having a high acid, high sugar diet or high stress can tip the balance and the Candida takes over, creating bloating, poor digestion and toxins, which leads to lethargy and a fuzzy head with feelings of depression – not nice! Never again will I have antibiotics without following it by a course of concentrated pro-biotics!)

On my specific plan I can't eat the things Candida feeds on which is alcohol, fruit, anything with sugar, flour, yeast or vinegar, no potatoes, no

pasta, no bread, no dairy from cow's milk, no Soya or processed foods and limited meat, fish and tomatoes. Only the occasional coffee!

Not a lot left you might think and some friends have said to me *"how can you cope?"* or *"I couldn't stand not being able to have a drink"* or *"I couldn't give up fruit or chocolate"* or whatever their favourite things are. I must admit to feeling very sorry for myself at a boozy cheese and wine tasting party when I had to drink water and just smell the wines. At least I could eat the garlic, avocado and goats cheese dip that I took with raw vegetables.

I also attended two weddings in the first month, both involved weekends away from my own kitchen and safe ingredients and, despite avoiding lots of things that I would normally enjoy, I still managed to feed the Candida and then feel really fed up, asking myself, "what's the point in trying!"

However the benefits of having LOADS more energy and a flat(ish) stomach again have made me determined to stick to the plan.

What I've realised is that there is absolutely no point in me thinking about what I can't have. There is absolutely no point looking longingly at the fruit in the supermarkets or the bottles of wine on the table. There is no point dwelling on the inconvenience of it all. All of these are just wasteful thoughts as they get me nowhere! Indeed they are doubly wasteful because if I am wasting time on those thoughts, I am not focussing my mind on more productive thoughts.

This brings me to the talk I attended by the **Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University**. (They provide positive thinking and mediation workshops free as a service to community throughout the world to help people get in touch with their true self www.bkwsu.org/uk)

The facilitator helped us identify 4 categories of thoughts:

- Positive
- Practical
- Negative
- Wasteful

The positive thoughts are about you and others, and the wider world. They include thoughts of appreciation, kind or loving thoughts. Empowering thoughts that increase your propensity to take positive action or feel good or calm, peaceful or enthusiastic. Happy joyful thoughts.

The practical thoughts

Can be mundane things like "*put the rubbish out on Tuesdays*", or "*what food do we need to get?*" through to organisational thoughts about planning activities and projects.

Negative thoughts

Thoughts stemming from fear: Anger, revenge, hate, loathing, resentment. Thoughts that you don't deserve good things or are not good enough. The belittling thoughts and that you are feeling out of control.

Wasteful thoughts

These include limiting, powerless thoughts, perhaps sarcastic towards yourself or others. Thinking these thoughts is likely to make you feel negative, weak, sad or angry. Resentful, jealous thoughts. Thoughts of self doubt, regret, guilty. Thoughts about feeling hopeless or misunderstood.

I would also suggest that thoughts about past situations which you regret, but which you can't change are wasteful thoughts. Also thoughts about things you can't change; for example dwelling on bad news on the TV; the way someone in the supermarket treats their kids; if it's not within your sphere of influence and you can't do anything about it what is the point in wasting your precious thoughts on it?

The consequences of what we think / our thoughts shape our reality

The world according to NLP, BK, Emotional Intelligence, Coaching, sports psychology, therapeutic counselling and just about every personal development book 'out there' concur..., that it's our own thoughts, which shape our experience of reality.

There is a connection between our thoughts and our physiological feelings so when you have a negative or wasteful thought your body experiences the corresponding negative feeling. For example, people who fear something often report that it feels like a tightness in their stomach or a tense feeling in their shoulders. People having happy thoughts feel lighter and don't have a heavy tension.

The feelings are felt and are real; therefore they shape our experience of reality. But we choose how we interpret the situation and what our thoughts are.

This explains why two people can go shopping in the rain and one thinks "I hate the rain" and feels tense and fed up. They notice all the things to reinforce that they hate the rain and have a miserable experience. The other person thinks to themselves, "I don't like the rain but I might as well make the most of it – at least I have an umbrella and probably the shops will be less crowded because of the rain." They feel more positive, they notice the things to reinforce their expectations and they have a good experience.

But how do we choose to have the positive response?

This concept can also be explained in simple terms by a story:

There is an old Cherokee Indian sitting by a tree, looking thoughtful and a bit troubled. His young grandson approaches him and asks "what's the matter?" He looks at the boy, takes a deep breath and answers "There are two wolves having a fight in my head."

"Two wolves?"

" Yes... they are in every human beings' head. One is positive thoughts and the other is negative thoughts. They are fighting each other all the time to get the upper hand."

The boy thinks for a moment then asks "Which wolf will win the fight?"

His Grandfather answers, "The one I feed."

So... the next time you feel angry, stressed or bitter, or say to yourself that person or that situation is driving me mad – pause, then take a moment to ask yourself "which wolf am I feeding?"

Thought → Feeling → CHECK RESPONSE → Feeling → Experience of reality

Which wolf are you feeding?

PS There are a series of one minute meditations you can download for free to help you train your mind so that you take a choice not to just react to situations – go to www.just-a-minute.org

NEWS, EVENTS AND TALKS

In April Fiona gave a talk to collaborative lawyers, IFA's and other professionals on how coaching assists people going through divorce and how professionals can enhance the client's experience by working together.

Bridget and Fiona gave a talk at the Business Exchange, particularly relevant for business owners working from home, on how to manage themselves and their environments to be more productive.

Bridget ran another in our series of workshops for clients of a prestigious Law firm, to help them deal with divorce. We have been asked to conduct one a month in rotation at their main office locations.

Fiona gave a talk to Basingstoke Women in Business on "*Change your outlook - stretching yourself for scaredy-cats*", which was very well received.

We say goodbye and we'll stay in touch to Ben Reed who has taken a full-time employed position to do coaching and business development for some of the top IFA's in the country through a product provider. He was given an offer he couldn't refuse but we are sure to be staying in touch and bouncing ideas.

We are conducting a mini workshop on *Flexible Working* via Business Link in July. Held in Shaftesbury, it's designed for employers and business owners who want to expand and attract quality staff. We'll explain how flexible working can work in practise for employers and employees and we'll also include tips for people who work for themselves or work from their own home office.

Finally, if you are interested in us speaking or conducting workshops for you - please get in touch.

Thanks until next time,

Fiona