

Mind Power!

#WellbeingWarriors

Compiled by Dr Melissa Barnaschone
(Student Counselling & Development)

It is well documented that the mind is incredibly powerful... and mind power is one of the most valuable and effective strengths you possess.

This power lies in your way of thinking. Your predominant thoughts prompt your behaviour, emotions and attitude and dictate your actions and reactions. Your thoughts have a powerful impact on your life.

Until recently, the popular opinion was that our brains were hardwired at birth and therefore, unchangeable. Most of us go through life paying minimal attention to, or even neglecting our cognitive processes (e.g. what our mind thinks, what it fears, what it notices, what it says to itself, what it believes and what it brushes aside).

What if I we told you that it is possible to make lasting, significant changes to our brain structure and function through a simple activity that we do throughout every day?
We can rewire our brains just by thinking!

Changing how you think, your beliefs, and your habitual reactions towards your unpleasant emotions will transform the structure of the brain and the chemicals it produces. This growth and rewiring of our brain cells is called [neuroplasticity](#). As we learn and adapt our thought processes, our brain literally remodels itself based on our new experiences. Ultimately, you are the architect of your brain.

Quote by Santiago Ramón y Cajal: “Any man could, if he were so inclined, be the sculptor of his own brain.”

Let's jump right into the good stuff – the techniques that you can use to shift your focus, direct your thoughts, adjust your mind and start to change your brain connections. These can easily be done right in the comfort of your home, for free and with next to no effort:

VISUALIZATION

To visualize is simply a mental rehearsal. The brain can't tell the difference between something real or imagined. When you mentally rehearse your new habits, you strengthen your ability to create them in your life.

- Clearly imagine yourself already being successful in your goal or having what it is you desire
- Repeat these images over and over again, for about five minutes, daily

AFFIRMATIONS

By pronouncing a simple and very powerful statement, either quietly to yourself or out loud, you affirm what it is that you aspire to. When you verbalize something and repeat it to yourself, it will influence your thoughts - this is why affirmations are successful.

Rules to remember when using affirmations:

1. Always affirm the positive: Use the words that reflect what you want to happen ("I am confident that I will pass this exam") and avoid using statements that focus on the opposite of what you want ("I'm so nervous").
2. Keep it short and simple: Use a short phrase (one sentence at the most) that, without thinking, you can repeat over and over again.

ELIMINATE NEGATIVE THINKING

Negative thinking drains your energy and is counterproductive.

- Train your conscious mind to think about what you want in life, and avoid thinking about what you don't want.
- You cannot think both negative and positive thoughts at the same time, as one will always dominate the other. So, we must make sure empowering thoughts and positive emotions are the dominating influence in our mind.
- Learn to weed out negativities such as worry and fear and keep your mind busy with expectations of the best.

REFLECT ON PAST SUCCESSES

- Every success that you have had, large or small, is proof that you are capable of achieving more success.
- Shift your focus to your strengths, your capacity for change and what you are most proud of yourself for.

Quote by Walter D. Wintle: "Life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster man, but sooner or later the man who wins, is the man WHO THINKS HE CAN!"

FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION ON CREATING A NEW REALITY

Everything begins with a decision – decide now to be in charge of your own vivid description of reality. Develop a realistic sense of control and utilize what you've got by asking yourself the following:

- What is within my control?
- What is working for me right now?
- What would I like to see continue happening / happening more often?
- What makes me capable of greatness?
- What does my future as a great person look like?

The science of neuroplasticity has proven that mastering your thinking through the regular practice of the above techniques will imprint quicker and have a more lasting effect than irregular attempts. Why not start immediately? A new life is but a new mind.