



UNDERSTANDING YOUR MINDSET

Teachers, scientists, and world leaders have sought to describe people's thoughts, their connection to existence, and their influence in people's lives. Some of them have made some pretty powerful statements.

"I think, therefore I am," came from the seventeenth-century French philosopher René Descartes.

Indian activist Mahatma Gandhi said, "Your beliefs become your thoughts. Your thoughts become your words. Your words become your actions. Your actions become your habits. Your habits become your values. Your values become your destiny."

The concept of thoughts being rooted in beliefs and those thoughts driving your destiny weren't invented yesterday; this concept has been around for a long time in philosophy. How you can use it to your advantage isn't so obvious, though. A lot of the research is buried in textbooks and scientific journals that most people will never read.

Simply put, your mindset has two parts. You have a conscious mind, which consists of all the thoughts you're aware of, and you have a subconscious mind, which is everything else that's going on in your head below your state of consciousness. Although you aren't aware of your subconscious mind, both parts of your mindset affect your actions.

YOUR CONSCIOUS MIND

Thoughts only occur in your conscious mind. Research from various laboratories indicates that you have as many as 70,000 conscious thoughts per day. The Cleveland Clinic puts the average number of thoughts per day at 60,000 and found that 95 percent of your thoughts are repetitive and 80 percent of your thoughts are negative.² Due to the subjective nature of thoughts, a reliable calculation of daily thoughts is pretty challenging, so—for

2 "Don't Believe Everything You Think," Cleveland Clinic Wellness, accessed May 5, 2017, at: <http://www.clevelandclinicwellness.com/programs/NewSFN/pages/default.aspx?Lesson=3&Topic=2&UserId=00000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000705>

the sake of this book—we'll stick to the lower end and say you have between 12,000 and 50,000 thoughts per day, which means that you can have as many as 40,000 negative thoughts and 38,000 of them are repeated—every day. Whew, that's a lot of thinking!

Think about that for a moment. Most of the thousands of thoughts you have every day are negative, and you repeat them to yourself over and over again. Since thoughts drive learning, action, progress, and experiences, it's no wonder that many people struggle with low self-confidence and motivation. The good news is that you can replace your negative thoughts with positive ones. You can develop a more positive attitude and create more positive thoughts, which in turn manifest a better reality.

If your car was low on gas and there was a gas station nearby with cheap gas because the gas had water in it, would you fill your tank with that watered-down gas? Of course not. Even though it might save you some money, it's going to cause engine problems. By the same token, if you fill your head with the most convenient thoughts—which are usually negative—your head is going to develop all kinds of knocks and pings. You don't want a noisy engine—you want a mindset that purrs like a kitten when you're at rest and roars like a lion when you hit the gas.

You need good gas to do that. You need to fill up with positive thoughts.

Here's one last thought before we move on to Part III—if you ruin your car with cheap gas, you can trade it in. You only get one brain. Take care of it. Keep it clean. It will serve you well and take you wherever you want to go. That's the cool thing about the high performance mindset.

THE POWER—AND THE CONFUSION—OF LINGUISTICS ON YOUR CONSCIOUS MIND

Linguistics refers to language, and *your* linguistics—the words you use in your head and speak out loud—are your thoughts. Due to the power of linguistics, it's essential for you to understand the meaning of the words you use. When you verbalize those words by saying them out loud, they become even more real to you and your conscious mind.

This leads me to one of the most important areas of this book that I want you to really take in. Linguistics has a powerful effect on your mindset, and it can cause a lot of confusion, too. For example, let's talk about the vocabulary people often use.

REAL-LIFE POWER OF LINGUISTICS

An unfortunate, personal event made me aware of the power of linguistics. I was at work one day and my mother called me. She was crying, and that wasn't normal for my mom. I asked her, "What's going on?" and she said, "I have something I need to tell you, Craig. I just left the doctor and I have breast cancer. I wanted to make sure that you knew."

I remember the pause. I then asked my mother, "Is this fixable, Mom?" and she said, "The doctor thinks so." I was very matter-of-fact about the issue, and I said, "So, we know where the finish line is. This is basically a marathon. We know where we are. We know where the finish line is. We just have to get there together." She agreed.

Then we talked for a few more minutes. I told her I loved her, said, "We'll figure this out," and I hung up the phone. I sat there in my chair for about ten minutes, numb. I couldn't process this new information while I was speaking to my mom on the phone, and I couldn't process it sitting there, either.

I finally got up and told one of the women in my office that I'd gotten a call from my mom. "My mom has cancer," I said. As soon as the words came out of my mouth, I fell apart. I just cried and I cried, and I had to get out of there. I told her I had to leave. I picked up my keys and left, and I didn't come back for the rest of the day. In reflection of that time, I realized the power of the words we speak and how important it is to know their meaning, because they affect us in more ways than we ever would have thought. You can read about her story at craigwillard.com/blog/mymomsblessing.

EXERCISE 1: LINGUISTICS

Have you ever thought much about the words "thoughts," "focus," "self-talk," "concentration," and "attention?" I noticed that when I coached clients, many of them seemed very confused about the meanings of these words.

STEP ONE

For this exercise, in as few words as possible and without looking them up, write down your definitions of the following words.

1. Thoughts:
2. Focus:
3. Self-talk:
4. Concentration:
5. Attention:

What did you find out? Are they all different? Or do some of these words seem similar? This is something I have come to learn a lot about during my coaching—people do not always understand the words they use and what they actually mean or how they affect their mindset. One of the first things I do with my clients is teach the power of linguistics and more specifically, the five words you just defined in your own words.

Before moving forward, I want to share some raw data regarding this exercise. I surveyed people to find out what they thought these words meant for this book. One person told me that “thoughts” were what you were thinking about, while “focus” meant to dedicate all your thoughts to a single goal or subject. He believed that “self-talk” had to do with doubts, that when your mind found something

interesting it got your “attention,” and that “concentration” happened when your mind was consumed by something. Each person gave me slightly different answers, with one thing in common: They all believed there were major differences between thoughts, focus, self-talk, concentration, and attention. Is that what you found out? This survey exposed a major problem with teaching people about mindset. There’s a lot of confusion around linguistics!

What if I told you that thoughts, focus, self-talk, concentration, and attention are the exact same thing when it comes to our mindset?

That’s right! Thoughts, focus, self-talk, concentration, and attention are the same. Think about it this way: When you have a thought, you have to talk to yourself about it. That is your self-talk. Your self-talk is what you focus on. When you focus on something, you concentrate on it, and you give all your attention to it. So essentially, thoughts, focus, self-talk, concentration, and attention are the same things. Make sense? Good.

STEP TWO

To prove this to yourself, think about a red ball. Close your eyes and imagine that red ball. Then open your eyes and keep reading.

Did you think about a red ball? Yes, your thought was “red ball.” Were you focused on that red ball? Yes, you focused on the red ball. Did you say the words “red ball” in your head? Yes, “red ball” was your self-talk. Self-talk is what you say to yourself inside your head. You can’t say one thing to yourself while you think about something else. They’re always the same. Was your attention on the red ball? How about your concentration? Red ball, red ball, right? Don’t be confused by different definitions of those words. Thoughts, focus, self-talk, concentration, and attention all mean the same thing.

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Now that you know thought, self-talk, focus, concentration, and attention mean the same thing, I’ll tell you why they’re important. You own them. They’re yours. You own your thoughts, your focus, your self-talk, your concentration, and your attention. You have a choice in what you think about, and your choices determine your actions and become your destiny.

It turns out that Gandhi fellow knew what he was talking about.

REAL-LIFE CONFUSION OF LINGUISTICS

Linguistics confusion can hinder our understanding of mindset, and it can cause misunderstandings in everyday life. You know that communication is critical to all aspects of life; however, I would suggest that how we communicate through linguistics and knowing what we are really saying is even more critical. The confusion over the words we use is very apparent when you think about it. What does “love” mean? Could you define it without using the word “love?” Many will say, “What do you mean? Love is love!” For another example, let’s talk about the word “focus.” I was at my daughter’s softball practice one day. Her team, a bunch of eight-year-old girls, was in the outfield and their coach was on second base. He started hitting balls to them.

When they didn’t attempt to catch the balls, the coach got upset and started yelling. “You have to focus, and you’re not focusing!” He hit a few more balls. Nothing changed. After practice, we got her things together and started walking to the truck as we normally do. I helped her with her cleats, put her in the truck, and we began to head home. As a mental coach, I knew when the softball coach asked the girls to focus, they wouldn’t change a thing. Eight-year-olds aren’t taught things like this; however, as adults, we expect them to know—even when we, as adults, may not truly understand what “focus” means.

“Hey, I noticed when the coach told you all to focus, nothing happened. You all didn’t do anything different,” I said to my daughter as we drove home. She nodded in agreement. Nothing changed with their actions.

“Just curious, do you know what the word ‘focus’ means?”

“Nope,” she said. “No clue.”

She didn’t know what it meant, and I’m willing to bet that if I asked her coach, he didn’t know either. Chances are that someone yelled “focus” at him one time when he wasn’t paying attention, and so he was just repeating it. This isn’t uncommon and definitely isn’t out of the norm.

That’s the problem with using words that people don’t understand or even expecting them to understand without clarity. Nothing changes!

A LOOK AT MULTITASKING

Your mind stays busy focusing, concentrating, and giving all its attention to those 12,000 to 50,000 thoughts every day. That's a lot of thoughts to squeeze into just one day. So, what about multitasking? Can you multitask?

EXERCISE 2: TAKE THE MULTITASKING TEST

As a high performance coach, this is a question I ask every one of my clients: “Can you multitask?” Most of them quickly reply with “Absolutely!” to which I respond, “Great, let's give it a test.” Follow along with me here and you can test yourself.

STEP ONE

Without speaking out loud, use your self-talk to count from one to ten in your head:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

STEP TWO

OK, great. Now do it again three times in a row, as fast as you can:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 1, 2, 3, 4,
5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

Did you do it? Nice!

STEP THREE

Now, out loud, I want you to sing or speak “If you’re happy and you know it clap your hands.”

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands.

STEP FOUR

Good job. Now say or sing it again three times in a row, back to back.

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands.

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands.

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands.

Good job!

STEP FIVE

Next, what I want you to do is—in your head—count as fast as you can from one to ten three times *while at the same time* saying “If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands” out loud three times.

How did you do? Did you laugh? You couldn’t do it, could you?



So, here’s the truth. If I chase two rabbits, I get neither. At the conscious level, multitasking isn’t possible. You validated this in Exercise 2. You can only think about one thing at a time. It is one thought or another—never both simultaneously. Some people think they can truly multitask; however, what they are doing is switching their attention back and forth real fast. This is very inefficient.

To illustrate this further, think about a time when you did something that required your total concentration. For example, have you ever put together a piece of IKEA furniture? It can be a bit painful—so many pieces and parts! You lay out the instructions and the parts. You have your tools ready, and as you begin to build that piece of furniture, your friend walks in and starts talking to you about his love life. He’s spilling his guts to you about his girl while

you're looking at the instructions and putting this thing together. Confusion sets in. You notice that you're not able to read the instructions, put the furniture together, and listen to what your friend is saying. Ultimately, you end up asking your friend to give you some time to put the furniture together and then you can give him your full attention. Or, you give up on the IKEA furniture for now and just listen to what your friend has to say.

REAL-LIFE MULTITASKING MISTAKES

Sometimes, our lack of ability to consciously multitask can get us into trouble. For example, people often attempt to multitask when they have conversations. Instead of actively listening to what the other person is saying, they spend their energy thinking about how they're going to respond *while the other person is talking*. If they formulate a good response in their head, they don't want to lose that thought so they focus on it—instead of the other person's words. This disconnects people. Being engaged and actively listening to the other person will improve your communication skills. As Stephen Covey said, "Seek first to understand, then to be understood."³

You can't listen to a person and think about your response at the same time. If you challenge this, you miss their half of the conversation. Then you're not even having a conversation with another person, you're just talking.

My mother used to say, "God gave us two ears and one mouth. We should listen twice as much as we talk." As it turns out, Mom was right. If you care enough about the person, listen to them with intention and then respond after you have finished listening; this can limit arguments and misunderstandings a great deal.

3 Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change, Anniversary Edition* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), page 249.

Okay, I know what you're thinking. Sure, there's one way you *can* multitask—just one, though. If you've done something so many times that it's automatic, you can do it while you're thinking about something else. For example, you can sweep the floor and talk on the phone at the same time. You've swept the floor so many times that it's automatic for you and you don't have to think about it when you're doing it. Building a piece of IKEA furniture isn't automatic, because you haven't built that particular piece of furniture enough times to do it automatically. If you teach someone to paint a room for the first time, they would have to pay attention to the task at hand and wouldn't be able to hold much of a conversation at the same time. That's the multitasking caveat—it's only possible when one action is so automatic that it doesn't require your concentration.

YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND

While your conscious thoughts occur in the conscious part of your mind, remember, your mindset has another part, and it's responsible for storing a lot of information you use to make decisions.

Your conscious mind accounts for a mere 2 percent of your thinking power. The other 98 percent is your subconscious

mind.⁴ If your conscious mind processes all the thoughts that you're aware of, then what goes on in your subconscious mind?

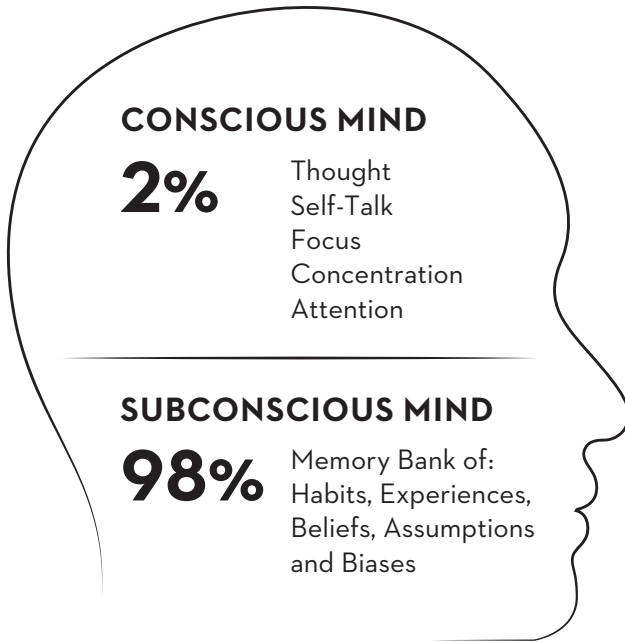


DIAGRAM 1 - MINDSET

Take a look at Diagram 1. Your subconscious mind is essentially a memory bank for your habits, experiences, assumptions, biases, and repressed memories. It has been said that some of them are there because they are too disturbing to allow the conscious mind to become aware of. Information is being stored in your subconscious mind

4 Michael S. Gazzaniga, "Principles of Human Brain Organization Derived from Split-Brain Studies," *Neuron*, Vol. 14, 217-228, February, 1995, accessed May 14, 2017, at: [www.cell.com/neuron/abstract/0896-6273\(95\)90280-5](http://www.cell.com/neuron/abstract/0896-6273(95)90280-5)

throughout your lifetime. What does it do with this information? I like to think of the conscious mind as sitting at a podium on a stage, asking the audience—the subconscious mind—what it knows about a particular thought.

When your conscious mind has an experience, it asks your subconscious mind “What do you know about this?” Then, your subconscious mind draws upon everything *it* knows about the experience to help your conscious mind understand it quickly. Your subconscious mind might have previous experience and valuable information about whatever it is you’re seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, or thinking. It pulls information quickly, because it is always looking to protect you. It tells your conscious mind everything it knows about that thing, good or bad. However, your subconscious mind likes to generalize that information to make it quicker to access and easier for your conscious mind to understand its present experience. Your subconscious mind enjoys looking for similarities and patterns between your current and past experiences. Doing this takes less time and burns less energy than thoroughly analyzing each new experience. It’s more efficient for your mindset to operate this way. You can make faster judgments, form faster opinions, and have faster reaction times.

You might see a cloud in the sky and think “Hey, that looks

like the state of Kentucky” because you live in Kentucky, and you are familiar with its shape. If you’re not from the state of Kentucky, then your subconscious mind won’t tell you the cloud looks like anything other than a cloud. It might tell you the cloud looks like something else that’s stored in your memory bank though. Your subconscious mind might recall a similarity between the present and the past, and you get a feeling called *déjà vu*, which is French for “already seen.” When you experience *déjà vu*, you might feel like you’re reliving a past experience. That ability can protect you, especially if you’re in a dangerous situation and your subconscious mind provides information that allows your conscious mind to make a quick decision, like getting out of the way of a speeding car or stepping back from the edge of a cliff.

However, you can’t always trust it to provide your conscious mind with the information you need to make good decisions. Your subconscious mind can feed your conscious mind information that’s false because, remember, it’s made up of all those habits, experiences, assumptions, biases, and beliefs you’ve developed in your lifetime, yet in a generalized way. If your subconscious mind is so unreliable, and it’s your mindset’s first source for sorting out new experiences, how do you know if what you’re thinking about those experiences is true or false?

Here's another funny thing about your subconscious mind: Everything in your memory bank is true *to you*. This is why everything stored there comprises your beliefs. If it wasn't your truth, it wouldn't be your belief.

Finally, as I mentioned earlier, your subconscious mind can't tell the difference between what's real and what you visualize. You can visualize anything and your subconscious mind believes it. That should give you a clue as to why visualization is so important to developing the high performance mindset. We will talk about this in more detail in Chapter 9.

HOW YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND AFFECTS YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Your subconscious mind affects your conscious mind, and it also affects your relationships. As a child, you interacted with your parents, grandparents, or other caregivers and formed relationships with them. You also observed how those people formed relationships with each other. You were then imprinted with how those relationships worked and—because your subconscious mind loves patterns and similarities—you usually end up duplicating them. On a subconscious level, your mind is always encouraging you to repeat your experiences in relationships. Have you ever told your spouse, “You're just like my mom!” or “You're just like my dad!” This is why!

Your subconscious mind acts like a rip current, too, pulling you away from new experiences. If it doesn't recognize an experience, it can encourage you to not have that experience; or, if it recognizes an experience you had before that didn't end well for you, it can warn you away from that experience. This is how it protects you, and this is also how it can force you to repeat—over and over again—experiences that may be bad for you, even though you don't know they are. It wants you to do nothing more than survive. This conflicts with your desire to thrive.

Seriously. Your subconscious mind can hurt you, for example, by encouraging you to mimic a relationship you were in, or that you witnessed—such as the one between your caregivers—that was problematic. Your subconscious mind likes for you to recreate bad relationships from your childhood that hurt you in an attempt to fix the pain associated with them, and that's just not possible. Unfortunately, unless you recognize what your subconscious mind is doing, you may keep repeating that problematic relationship over and over again in your own life. You're unable to fix the past, and you most likely won't be able to make the current relationship right either.

That's why being a present and active parent or caregiver is so important to your children's future. If you're an absent parent, your children may grow up to seek out

absent partners, believing they can control them and make them remain present in an attempt to repair their own emotional damage. Subconsciously, they want to fix that past relationship. You can imagine how that usually works out. An absent parent may also drive the child to feel as if they are not worthy of love and so they self-sabotage relationships, especially those they feel they are not worthy of.

Once you recognize the pattern, you can do something about it. Your subconscious mind may be telling you to find a partner who's absent; however, you can decide to focus on what you do want instead of what you don't want. You can focus on finding a partner who's present.

AVOIDANCE CREATES ATTRACTION

There's a good reason to focus on what you *want*, instead of what you *don't* want. When you attempt to avoid something, you attract it—in mass quantities.

You may have heard a friend say, “I don't know what I want; however, I know what I don't want.” Oddly enough, that same friend keeps getting more of what they don't want. They end up in the same bad relationships, or in jobs they hate. Why is that?

It's because your subconscious mind doesn't understand negatives. It doesn't understand what you don't want. Your mind only understands what you're focused on, whether or not these thoughts are about something you *want* or *don't want*. So, if you tell yourself "I'm not going to date assholes," you're probably going to end up dating assholes. If you say to yourself, "I'm not going to be late for work," you'll probably be late. And if you say, "I'm not going to skip the gym," you will almost certainly not make it to the gym. While you might think, "I'm not going to skip the gym" sounds positive, it actually isn't because, without some self-doubt about going, you wouldn't have to say this to yourself.

Your mind doesn't understand the "not" part of the equation, so you have to train yourself to focus on what you want, instead of dwelling on what you don't want. Take, for example, your friend who seems to always find himself in bad jobs or relationships. Rather than focusing on what he doesn't want, he should figure out what he wants in a new career or a relationship and focus on that, instead. Likewise, if you start every day expecting to face challenges that will make you angry, tell yourself "I am going to find the silver lining in all situations." Use your self-talk to focus on what you want to happen: "I will be on time for work today, and I'm excited about going to

the gym.” Statements like this are much more beneficial subconsciously.

YOUR SUBCONSCIOUS MIND PREPARES YOU FOR THE WORST

Your subconscious mind looks out for you, sometimes by preparing you for the worst. If your conscious mind asks it for information about something, your subconscious mind searches its memory bank of past experiences for something similar. When it does this, it may zero in on something bad so you can prepare and protect yourself. For example, if you walk through a tunnel and see something coiled up in the dark, your subconscious mind is more likely to tell you it’s a snake than a rope. Although your conscious mind will kick in and figure out that it’s a rope, your first thought is “snake.”

This response by your subconscious mind can protect you from dangerous situations. It can also cause you a lot of grief. For example, if you text your girlfriend and she doesn’t respond right away, you might begin to freak out thinking she’s with another guy because the last time this happened to you, your then-girlfriend didn’t respond because she actually *was* with another guy. That’s how your subconscious mind can get you into trouble. Then, when you finally get ahold of her, you lash out and question

why she didn't answer only to discover that she was at the movies with her girlfriend the whole time, and her phone was in silent mode.

By now, you should have a good understanding of how the subconscious mind can help you—or hurt you. You can probably see why you'd want to manage that memory bank and make sure it's filled with valuable information that benefits you. I'll tell you how to do this soon.

HOW THE CONSCIOUS AND SUBCONSCIOUS MIND INTERACT

As I highlighted in Diagram 1, your conscious mind makes up about 2 percent of your thinking power. Now, let's explore that 2 percent in Diagram 2. The conscious mind interacts with the subconscious mind all the time. The conscious mind is always thinking. The mind doesn't shut off, nor does it have moments where it thinks about “nothing” as you may commonly hear. You may have heard someone say you need to “quiet your mind” or “calm your thinking.” Both statements are really referring to control. However, do you know how to control your thinking? You will by the time you finish this book.

The point I'm making here is that either you control your conscious mind or it controls you. That's the overall

decision you must make. As Diagram 2 shows, thoughts only come in two forms: They are either positive or they are negative. This is represented by two of the three arrows to the right of the head. The effects of a positive thought include happiness, success, gratitude, kindness, love, and affection. However, if your thought is negative, then you might experience worry, stress, anxiety, depression, anger, sweaty palms, and even nervousness, to name a few. With a high performance mindset, you take control of your thoughts and decide whether each one is positive or negative.

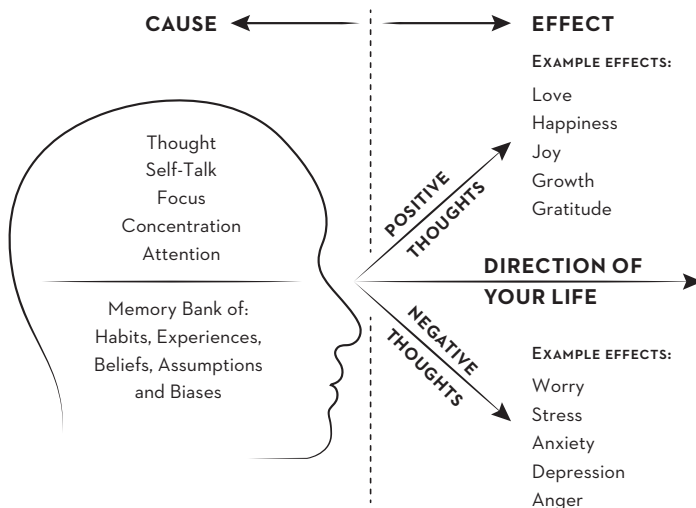


DIAGRAM 2 - CAUSE AND EFFECT

Again, every thought will be positive or negative depending on how you decide to perceive it. This diagram is a key element to understanding your mindset. On the left

of the dotted line is what I call “cause.” On the right side of the dotted line is the “effect.” I say this because our thoughts create results, a.k.a. effects. Just knowing the effects of a positive versus a negative thought should be enough to motivate you to take control of your thoughts. Who wants to worry when they could be happy? You have the power to choose whether a thought is positive or negative. However, there’s much more to it.

Beyond the emotional and physiological effects, *your life takes the direction of whichever you choose most often*. The middle arrow in Diagram 2 is your life’s direction, and if you have more positive thoughts than negative thoughts, your life will go in a positive direction; you will attract more positive people and situations. Again, what you think, you manifest. If you have more negative thoughts than positive thoughts—well, you know where that leads you.

Your life becomes what you think and, like Gandhi tells us, your beliefs ultimately become your destiny—beliefs start with your thought/focus/self-talk.

Your positive and negative thoughts drive the direction of your life, and they attract similar people, circumstances, and events. Good attracts good, while bad attracts bad. You’ve probably heard of karma and even used it to explain something that happened to someone else. Bad karma

REAL-LIFE EFFECTS OF MEDICATING YOUR THOUGHTS

In the introduction, I pointed out that I was once diagnosed with general anxiety disorder and was put on medication to treat it. That medication made me feel like I was experiencing the world through a dull filter because, in a sense, I was. You see, when you go to a physician to express concerns over your anxiety and/or depression, they ask you what your symptoms are. For example, if you have a headache, you experience pain. However, just because you take medication to relieve the pain so you no longer feel the headache, the cause of that pain—the nerve pinch, or whatever is causing your headache—is still there. In both situations, physicians are accustomed to treating effects, a.k.a. symptoms. Thus, if you ever quit taking the medicine, what happens? That's right—the effects come back. Why? Medication doesn't treat causes which—in the case of anxiety—are the thoughts in your head and how you perceive them.

When I stopped taking that medication, all the *effects* came back and I knew that if I wanted to make them go away for good, I had to treat the *cause*. I had to take control of my thoughts and learn to focus on what I wanted in life instead of what I didn't want, and I had to learn how to turn more thoughts into positive ones.

The pills masked the real problems, which were my thinking and, as you recall, your thoughts are your self-talk, your focus, your concentration, and your attention. I worked very hard and as I improved my mindset, my issues subsided without medication. I had heard that I needed to control my thinking, I just didn't know how. When I realized my thinking was my self-talk, everything changed. I could change my self-talk, thus correcting the cause of my anxiety. By treating the cause, the effects disappeared on their own. I honestly have not suffered from anxiety in many years as a result. I'll provide you with the same tools that worked for me and all my clients as well, a little later.

In summary, the dotted, vertical line in the diagram separates the stimuli (cause) and the response (effect). The stimuli are our thoughts. The response is the positive and the negative effects of our thoughts and our emotional and physiological responses which influence our actions and the direction of our life. The key here is that treatments—such as pills for anxiety and depression—mask what's on the right, the effect. In order to truly resolve those effects, we have to deal with what's on the left, *the way we think*. Anxiety and depression are both thinking errors. They are things that we can absolutely overcome. This is how I've gotten away from general anxiety disorder. I haven't experienced anxiety in many, many years; I have learned that this is the true cause and I have worked really, really hard to correct it.

isn't a mystical power that curses people who do bad things. People who decide their thoughts are going to be negative attract negativity and their lives go in a direction that brings them bad things. Bad karma is nothing more than receiving negative results from negative thinking. Good karma works the same way. If you choose to see the world in a positive light and accept each thought as positive, your life will go in a positive direction. You'll attract positive people and experiences. Like attracts like.

If your friend did something bad to you, you might have thought, "Karma's going to get them eventually." Then, something bad happened to them or they did something that caused them to get hurt. You automatically pointed out this self-fulfilling prophecy, saying, "Hey, that's karma. You had it coming to you and you got it." In reality, your friend created his own negative karma with his negative thoughts. Again, it's not mystical. It's just how we think. Karma happens because what we focus on, we create. When you focus on something negative, things are going to come back to you in a negative manner. That includes wishing bad karma on someone else; so, if you wish bad karma on someone, that negative thinking will ultimately hurt you. Think twice before you wish bad karma on anyone—even if you feel they deserve it.

Remember, what you focus on, you create, and your

conscious thoughts—driven by your subconscious habits, experiences, assumptions, biases, and beliefs—will ultimately become your destiny.

YOUR MINDSET IN ACTION

As mentioned previously, every conscious thought you have is influenced by your subconscious mind.

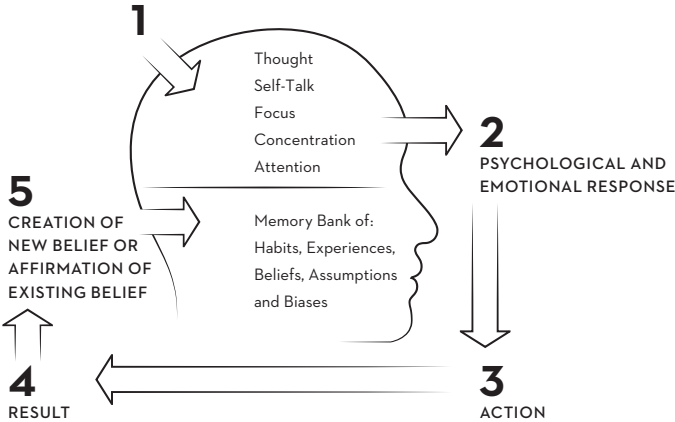


DIAGRAM 3 - MINDSET WHEEL

In Diagram 3, “Mindset Wheel,” you can see how the conscious mind experiences life through the lens of the subconscious mind. Your view of the world is dramatically affected by your memory bank of biases and beliefs, which evolved from past experiences. The Mindset Wheel is the process that takes place when storing information within your subconscious mind.

When you experience a thought (1), your subconscious mind gives your conscious mind information about it based on past experiences. That information will make your conscious mind see the thought as positive or negative, which leads to an emotional and a physiological response (2). If your mind decides a thought is positive, you'll experience positive emotions and positive physiological responses. For example, you experience a positive thought and your response is to hold your head up in confidence, straighten your posture, turn your body toward someone, make eye contact, and smile. If your mind decides a thought is negative, you'll experience negative emotions and negative physiological responses. It may come in the form of a frown or a grimace, or you might experience physical pain, get sweaty palms, or display aggression. Your facial expression and body language change, and you tend to turn away from others and look down. This only causes more negative responses, because when you close yourself off to the world by turning away from people or consistently look down, you can't see the opportunities in front of you. Those who are happy don't display negative emotions or physiological responses, and vice versa. By paying attention to non-verbal cues, you can quickly recognize the state someone is in.

Your emotional and physiological responses to thoughts influence your actions (3). If you feel good, you smile and

someone smiles back. If you feel bad, you scowl or frown and the person turns away. Positive thoughts cause you to open yourself up to opportunities, learn something new, or connect with someone. Negative thoughts cause you to shut down, neglect to act, and regress.

How you act produces a result (4). That result alone is not a success or a failure; you make a choice as to how you define your results. We'll talk more about failure in Chapter 7. From here, the result loops back into your mind through your sensory system, which is your vision, hearing, taste, smell, touch, and balance—however the result is realized (5).

This spinning of the Mindset Wheel is where our subconscious mind is programmed.

The good thing is, because of neuroplasticity, this wheel is capable of overwriting our subconscious mind with new information because our subconscious mind is constantly recording. It is always recording whatever we're saying and thinking. All of that stuff comes back around through our sensory system and is recorded as new beliefs, assumptions, and biases, or it affirms an existing belief.

This is important when you consider how the two parts of your mindset—the 2 percent conscious mind and the 98

percent subconscious mind shown in Diagram 2, “Cause and Effect”—interact. Your conscious mind is always taking in new information, and your subconscious mind is always telling it how to interpret that information. With a low performing mindset, you’re at the mercy of your subconscious mind providing outdated information that wants to protect you from doing pretty much anything. As hard as it may be to believe, your mind only wants you to survive. It doesn’t care whether you thrive. That’s where the high performance mindset makes the largest difference. With a high performance mindset, you control how you perceive a thought, so you also control the emotional and physiological responses and your actions. You control how you gauge the results, and you can use that power to reinforce a positive belief or change a negative one.

THE NEGATIVE MINDSET VERSUS THE HIGH PERFORMANCE MINDSET

The most important factor in this equation is your power to be in control. The stimuli coming into your mind will receive a response from you. How you process the stimuli and respond to it is up to you.

The negative mindset decides that more thoughts are negative than positive. It receives stimuli, has a thought based upon the information offered by the subconscious

mind and decides the thought is negative. The negative thought causes a negative physiological and emotional response. This leads to negative actions, a poor result, and ultimately being recorded as truth in your subconscious mind. People with a negative mindset suffer the consequences of their own personal choices. Even if you feel you are at the mercy of others, you still have a right to choose and a decision to make.

On the other hand, the high performance mindset decides that more thoughts are positive. People with a high performance mindset reap the benefits of their choices. When you have a high performance mindset, there's no difference between an obstacle and an opportunity, because they're the same thing, and they're positive. You can train your mind to accept every obstacle and every barrier as a challenge; or, you can train your mind to accept every obstacle as an opportunity to learn, act, progress, and create fulfilling experiences that lead to a happy life.



TIME AND THE MIND: DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, AND HAPPINESS

In Chapter 3, we learned that our mindset contains two parts—the conscious and the subconscious. We learned what each part does, how they work together, and how we create habits. Now, I would like to bring your attention to another very important concept that ultimately affects your overall mindset, and thus controls your life. It's called *TIME* and it's critical to really understand this section in order to fire up your high performance mindset.

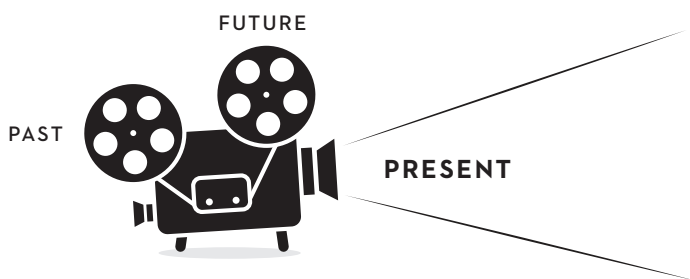


DIAGRAM 4 - PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

When talking about time, one of the most critical concepts to understand is how our mind processes time. There are three points of time our mind understands. They are *future*, *past* and *present*. To help you with this concept, check out Diagram 4, “Past, Present, and Future.” The old film projector has a front reel—the future—which indicates what hasn’t happened yet. The rear reel is the past—what has already happened. Then, there is the projector light; this is the present. For example, if you’re about to watch a movie, you will place the movie on the front reel. The movie itself is in the future because you have yet to see it. When that movie starts to play, the film slides down in front of the light and is projected onto a projector screen. As the movie plays, every single slide that is projected through the film projector is a sense of the present moment. So, the present is always moving. It never stops. Once the film has passed the projector light, it travels to the back reel, which is the past. The back reel is housing the part of the movie we have already seen.

Now, why do I bring up this? Everyone knows there's a future, a past, and a present. What you may not know is how those points of time have a SIGNIFICANT impact on your mindset. Do you recall the multitasking exercise? We can only focus on one thing at a time, thus, we can only be in one reference of time or another. This is the critical part. Let's dig further.

Let's say that you're watching a movie and in the present scene, a drunken man is seen ripping the front door open and running out of the house. He has his car keys in one hand and a beer bottle in the other. As you watch his every move, he runs to the car, pissed and drunk. He gets to the car, struggles with the door a bit, and gets in. He slams the beer bottle in the center console, shoves the key into the ignition, and starts the car. As he puts the car into reverse, he puts the pedal to the metal, backing out of the driveway as fast as he can. He then slams the car into drive and floors it, squealing tires as he takes off.

All of a sudden, your mind shifts, "Oh, my God, what's about to happen? What if this happens or that happens?" You might even be holding your head, saying, "Oh, my God, this is gonna get really, really bad." You begin to worry and get anxious. You're really concerned; you start to visualize what's going to happen as if you're a fortune teller! This desire to know what's next pushes you to shift

your thinking to the future reel, that area storing the rest of the movie you have yet to see. Not knowing what's going to play out, you start imagining what might end up happening. This is where *anxiety* comes from. You shift from the present moment to the future. Since you can only process one thought at a time, when you move your single thought to that future wheel, you can no longer be present. When you aren't present—because you're focused on what's about to happen and literally not paying attention to the movie playing—you're missing the movie and everything that's happening at the moment. You visualize a really, really bad outcome for the drunk guy. "Oh, my God! He's going to kill someone!" However, in reality, you don't really know.

All of a sudden you snap back to the present moment! You've spent the last four or five minutes not paying any attention to the movie at hand—because if you're paying attention to the future, you cannot be paying attention to the movie that's actually playing—and you just realized you spent all that time thinking about what was about to happen. Your mindset shifts again back to the present moment. "Oh, my God, I just missed part of the movie." While you were fortune-telling about what could have happened, the movie you missed has now rolled up into your past. Now you shift again, this time to the past wheel. "If only I would have paid attention. If only I would have