

Spring is in the air, spring is in the air, spring is in the air. That is what I keep telling myself because you know what snow is on the ground, it is seriously on the ground, it has been piling up, this has been a crazy, crazy winter. And so, I have been using that affirmation Spring is in the air, spring is in the air.

And the interesting thing is that sometimes it makes me feel better, but not all of the time. And I was thinking about why that was and it reminds me of the power or not of affirmations. And I first learned about the power of positive thinking and the power of affirmations about 30 years ago, when I was first studying Stephen Covey, and Marianne Williamson and Deepak Chopra, and going to the Unity Church, and that is when I started memorizing passages and sayings. And I was thinking about this podcast, and I went back and I had to look up this one affirmation that I would say all the time, and it really was something that we would do at the end of church services.

And here's the affirmation, "the light of God's surrounds us, the light of God informs us, the power of God protects us, and the Spirit of God watches over us, wherever we are, God is", and I loved the ending of church and when we would say that. And the interesting thing about it is that every Sunday, when I would say that I would say it, and I would believe it. And that's when I really started to understand the power of affirmations and the power of thinking positive thoughts.

And here's the deal, that sometimes they work. And sometimes they don't, or they don't work for long. And so that's how it goes with the concept of thinking happy thoughts are using positive affirmations. And I love the idea behind them because it is to help us to shift our mindset. To shift out of yes, I'm going to use this phrase stinking thinking. And that is absolutely a good thing. And there is a huge difference between shifting our thinking, which is a great thing, and changing the way that you think in the first place.

And if you are trying to change habits in your life, whether it has to do with overeating or over drinking or overworking or over shopping or doing something that's not in alignment with the leader that you want to be. And if you have been cycling around those same behaviors, chances are that you are probably cycling around those same thoughts. And so today, I'm going to share with you a way to not just shift your thinking, but a way to change the way that you are thinking.

So, what I want to do is to start off with understanding what is even going on in our heads when we are trying to change a habit or level up or when we are feeling really uncomfortable in the moment when it's time to either set a goal, or to follow through with our protocol that we put together. So, in our heads, we're like, I totally want to eat that doughnut. And then we're also like, I

know that I shouldn't I said that I wouldn't I'm not going to eat it. Or maybe we're thinking I really want to drink right now. I had a rough day and I absolutely deserve it. And then we're also thinking I promised I wouldn't. That's not part of my protocol. And when we are having those two thoughts simultaneously, we are experiencing something called cognitive dissonance.

It's in our brain cognition, and it is dissonance, it feels really uncomfortable. And cognitive dissonance is the experience of holding two conflicting thoughts in our head. And when you are trying to level up, that is definitely going to happen. And that dissonance can feel like confusion. It can feel like overwhelm. It can feel like intense urges and then also guilt. And the image that I like to use is this idea of being in a rowboat or a kayak. And you are going along in a river and it's like you have one thought or rowing on the right side is going from front to back. I want to feel better; I want to be healthy; I want to do my right thing. And then the other side on the left side, you're rowing from back to front. And you're thinking no one won't hurt I've had a long day; it's going to be okay if I just cheat this one time. And what's happening is that when we're rowing one way on one side and a different way on the other, we're going in circles, and that's what it feels like. It's like this circle of being stuck in overwhelm and indecision and in cognitive dissonance, and it feels like there's a lot of effort and energy going on. But it doesn't feel like there's a lot of movement and that causes discomfort. It's emotional discomfort, and it is amplified If you haven't seen your results on the scale, or if you feel like what you're doing isn't working.

And here are a couple of other examples that I'll give you, if you are thinking about a promotion, you might be thinking I could, I could probably get a promotion. And then another thought might be, you're pretty good right where you are, that can create cognitive dissonance. Or if you're thinking about a relationship, if you're thinking you know what I can, I could use a little more intimacy in this relationship or a little more passion. And then the next step might be, this relationship is as good as it's gonna get. That is also cognitive dissonance. And those thoughts that dissonance is the reason that people are hesitant to set goals or to say out loud what they really want in the first place. Because as soon as you set a goal, and it requires you to start thinking differently than you were before.

By its very nature, a new goal, or a new result requires new thoughts. If you want to be healthier, now, you've got to change your thoughts, you have to think, hmm, what am I going to change about? What am I what I'm eating? Or about how I'm sleeping, or about the way that I'm moving? or exercising? You want to get a promotion, and you decide you're going to go for it? Now you have to think about alright, who do I need to talk to? What courses do I need to take? What research do I need to do? What do I need to do to set myself up for success and to get that

promotion? And if you want a more intimate relationship? Now you have to think about how am I going to interact differently with this person? What could I do to make this relationship better?

So, there are all these new ideas, and your brain is not going to like it. Because your brain is designed to seek pleasure, avoid discomfort, and do that as quickly and efficiently as possible. And all of your ideas about change are naturally going to come with a certain level of resistance, it's totally natural that your brain is gonna be like, hey, wait a second, there's no need for any additional discomfort here in your life. Just let that goal set aside for a little bit. And all of those thoughts around that goal, just let them go. And let's get back to homeostasis to what we're comfortable with. And let's just let things stay the same here for a little bit. And let's keep thinking the thoughts that we've been thinking and believing the way that we always have because that is way easier. It's more pleasurable and comfortable. And it's way more efficient. That is what our brain does, when we are looking to level up.

And then if you're like, alright, fine, I believe your brain, I'm not going to level up. There's also going to be cognitive dissonance because you are also wired for growth. It feels really, really good to learn new things and to achieve new goals and to level up and to see what amazing things that you can do. So those thoughts about your dreams, those dreams and ideas are going to keep tapping you on the shoulder and saying, hey, what about this idea? And so there you go, again, that cognitive dissonance cycle is there too. Because your brain now is like, hey, you know what, I actually feeling really uncomfortable when I'm out of breath at the top of the stairs, or when I wake up with a headache. Or when I'm too tired from working all day, I don't want to live like that anymore, I know that there's a better life. So that creates cognitive dissonance as well.

So here is the really cool thing about all of that, no matter if you're going to go for your dreams or if you're going to stay where you are, you're going to be uncomfortable, you're going to experience cognitive dissonance. You'll either have the feeling of doing hard things and managing your brain around that or you're gonna have the discomfort of staying where you are and experiencing the discomfort of not changing and feeling stagnant or stuck. So cognitive dissonance is here to stay. And it's going to happen either way. So, you might as well have the discomfort and also achieve new results.

So how do you do this? So, what I'm going to do is give you three ways to consciously manage your mind and to use cognitive dissonance in a way that is more helpful. And the very first thing that you get to do is to decide. You get to decide if you want to lose the weight. If you want to get the promotion, if you want to have more intimacy in your relationship, decide if you want it. Don't

say, I'm not sure I don't know. Or maybe it's not time decide. Because when you decide, you release a lot of mental energy. And the truth is that even if you decide not to go after it right now, that's a good thing too, because at least then you're not stuck in confusion and feeling like you're powerless or feeling like you should be doing something and then you're not doing it.

Now, as soon as you do decide to go after your goal, you're going to have cognitive dissonance. We've already decided that right? It's just part of the process. So, decide what you want and know the cognitive dissonance is going to be a part of that. That's the first thing is just realizing that discomfort is part of the game. And what we're doing here is getting a little more comfortable with feeling uncomfortable.

And then the second part is to be ready for that cognitive dissonance to be ready for those conflicting thoughts. And when they come, what I would like for you to do is to identify what they are. Identify those two main conflicting thoughts or beliefs, I want you to know that a belief is just a thought that you've had for a really long time over and over and over again, you have believed that thought you have believed that sentence in your head to be true for so long that you stopped questioning it, you stopped questioning its veracity. But still, it's just a thought. And it's a thought that you've had so many times, you may not even recognize it.

So, when you are experiencing cognitive dissonance, and that discomfort, you get to look for those beliefs and those thoughts and to get crystal clear on what they are, get clear about those two conflicting thoughts that has your boat going around in circles. And when you do this, I want you to whittle down the thought into one sentence for each side, just like the examples that I gave earlier. Clearly, I want to lose weight. And then the other thought is, I tried before, and it didn't work. Those are clear and concise thoughts that are conflicting, and that causes cognitive dissonance.

And then once you have done that, the third thing you could do, and this is the really fun part, this is the juicy part is you look at those two thoughts and you come up with a middle thought that somewhere in between them, that you actually believe of this is really powerful. Because people will say to me, you know what, I want to want to believe that I can lose weight, I want to believe that I could save my marriage, or I want to believe that I could actually find work life balance in this crazy schedule. But Traci, I don't, I don't believe it. And I really can't see how I couldn't believe it because I don't believe it. And so, what I want you to notice is that not being able to see how it could be true is really about two things. It's about the logistics, it's about the diet, it's about the schedule, it's about the external environment, and the movement, and all of those things that we

need to do to change what is. And it is also about doing those things consistently. And the reason that we would do the right actions consistently, to establish change, and to get results, the way that we do that is by changing first, how we think about them. That's how we do things consistently. That's how we eventually begin to believe them. And that is where the power of believable thoughts come in.

So, you come up with a thought that lies somewhere in between those two conflicting thoughts. And when you come up with this middle thought, I call that a bridge thought or ladder thought. That's how we talk about it in our Healthy Leader Inner Circle. And it takes practice to come up with those thoughts, because we're used to thinking on one side or the other. So, in this example, a bridge thought could be, I haven't lost the weight before. But I've gained a lot of knowledge and wisdom, and I'm going to use that right now. Or maybe it didn't work before. But it is definitely possible. That's another bridge. And then I love this bridge, not for losing weight to I'm willing to consider that I can lose weight. All of those thoughts are true. And they are believable.

So, the idea is to find a middle neutral and believable thought for you that your brain can believe. And you're going to go from I tried this before and it totally didn't work to alright, losing weight is possibility. And when you find a neutral thought, what you're doing is you're closing the gap of that cognitive dissonance. And when you do that, it's like lifting that left oar out of the water just a little bit. It releases that spinning and circle, and it gives you mental momentum.

And another really cool way that I've used this is with people who say mean things to themselves throughout the process. So perhaps they look in the mirror and they say things like you are disgusting. They say that to themselves. And if I would give them an affirmation, like, okay, instead of saying that, say I am beautiful, I love my body. They could say that, but honestly, it doesn't really help all that much because they don't believe it. Your brain is like, okay, you're saying that, but it's actually total BS. But if we find a bridge thought, and instead of saying you're disgusting, you could say you know what, I have a body. And you can replace a thought that is extremely negative with one that you believe. Then those are thoughts that begin to shift your brain. Those are thoughts that your brain is going to accept. And when you do that, it does a couple of really cool things. One, it releases that dissonance a little bit and it gives you a place where you can unhook from those negative moments. And it also gives you space to think about what you're thinking and to gently ease your into a new belief system, instead of just kind of covering it up with an affirmation. I like to call that throwing pink paint on something and trying to force yourself into a new thought and new behaviors. And it lasts until the pink paint dries up right and starts to crinkle.

So here is the greatest thing of all, as you start to practice believing new thoughts what you do is you actually will start to gain that mental traction, which will also help with your action and achieving your results. And then you start to move towards your goals. And then your brains like hey, I actually can see the results, which then makes it easier for your brain to believe that you can lose weight. So, then your next thought might be you know what, I can lose weight and you start to believe it, you start to believe that maybe I will get this promotion, or you know what this relationship is actually worth saving. And so that is actually what is happening when we're looking for results ahead of time when we say things like, you know what I just need for the scale to move a little bit for a little bit of motivation, or just need for the boss to give me a sign that I am really good enough.

But here's the deal when we rely on those external validations as good as they feel, and as much as we love them. And as much as our brain loves them. We are practicing believing the proof. We don't need practice believing proof. But we need practices we need practice on is managing our mind and believing new things, and thinking new things, which is really what is going to truly help you to transform in the long run. Because believing in yourself and learning how to do that, along with taking the right actions is the magic pixie dust. We're combining your thoughts and your emotions and your actions together and you're doing it in a way that is believable on the inside before you have any proof on the outside. Now that is a meta skill. And that is the power of believing new things ahead of time.

So, remember that cognitive dissonance is natural, it's totally normal, it's part of leveling up. And once you have decided to go for it, be on the lookout for it. Be on the lookout for those conflicting thoughts and for that discomfort and then say aha, I'm on to you, I am going to identify the exact conflicting thoughts that are causing this dissonance. And then you get to create a bridge thought that you can use to begin creating a new mindset. Use that thought when it's time to follow through on your plan and start sowing the seeds for believing that thought so that when you do achieve your results, your brain has come along with your body.

So, there you are. That is the practice of believing things. I think that this is one of the most amazing things that I've ever learned, and I am so excited to share it with you. So, thank you for tuning in and sharing your time with me. So go forth and create an amazing week full of believable thoughts that help you level up and create the amazing, amazing life that you absolutely deserve.

Hey there if you are ready to take your Wellbeingness© to the next level, come visit thewellness.coach where I've got lots of free resources and make sure that you type in thewellness.coach (not .com) and I will see you there.