

It is a beautiful day now in Cleveland. Earlier, I took my puppies out for a walk, and we walked outside and it was pouring. So I was trying to figure out how to walk two puppies under an umbrella. And it was probably very interesting looking to other people.

Anyway, today is going to be amazing, because we are talking about thinking on purpose. We're talking about thought management or mind management, creating thoughts using your brain as a tool, whatever you want to call it. It's exciting because I work very closely with people on how to manage their thoughts. And frankly, I am also constantly managing my thoughts. This is a practice for sure.

So the last episode was all about taking consistent action. And I talked about the TEA cycle, that's Tango Echo Alpha. And that stands for thoughts, emotions, and actions. And it basically is a concept that is powerful, extremely powerful. And the idea is that your thoughts, create your emotions, which then lead to your actions. And understanding this concept is key to self leadership. And it's literally in the center, that the Wellbeingness® model, the self coaching self leadership model that I share with all my clients. And it's important because many of us don't even realize that some of our thoughts don't serve us, we think that what is really going on is that the world is responsible for our emotions. And really, it's our thoughts that cause our emotions, which then influence our actions. That's the TEA cycle.

And so it's our thoughts first and foremost, that we need to pay attention to, because our thoughts, not the outside world, create our experiences. So of course, it's super important to focus on our thoughts and to understand why we are thinking what we are thinking. And then if we so choose, we can decide to think something different, or to use our brain on purpose, to think something different instead of it using us.

And so what I want to do today is share a three-step process that I use to help people manage their thinking. And first and foremost, we have to understand, number one, that there are things in the world that happen and we have no control over them. Right? Especially things that have already happened, things that are in our past, or things that other people have done or circumstances. And so there's that saying it is what it is. And that is so much power. Because when we try to butt up against what is what already exists in the world, we are always always always going to lose just like the weather this morning, as I was butting up against and I was thinking, are you kidding me? How do I hold the leads the poop bag, this umbrella, and I was resisting what was and I'm going to lose every single time that I do that.

And this is really important because it helps us understand that the world the weather, the rain is not what is causing my emotions, it's my thinking that is causing my emotions.

And this morning was, one of these dogs is going to get loose, I'm going to step on one of them. This is not how I imagined this to be. And I was creating my own anxiety. And so another way I want to prove this to you is that our thoughts, not the world cause our emotions if we think about COVID right now. So it's August 2021 right now, and the Delta virus is coming up, there are things going on in the world, and people are feeling flustered about it. And some people that I speak with are bouncing off the walls really freaking out about all of it and masks and whether we should wear them or whether we should not wear them. And then other people not so much. They're not freaking out. And so what is the difference if COVID if the external world was what caused our emotions, and we all would be feeling the same way. And we clearly are not.

So first and foremost, as we go through this, we got to understand, double red underline that the world does not cause our emotions. It's really convenient to blame the world on our emotions, but the world does not cause our emotions, our thoughts, cause our emotions.

And then the second thing that I want you to embrace is that you are not your thoughts. You are not your emotions, you are not your actions. You are the person behind the scenes, you have the ability to watch your thoughts. You have the ability to watch your emotions, you have the ability to watch your actions. And I know some of you are thinking, you know, our character is defined by our actions and our action, you know, shares with other people who we are.

Yes, I absolutely believe that and we've all made mistakes. We've all done things that are not in alignment with our character. We have all thought things that we wish we hadn't thought we have all reacted emotionally in ways that we wish that we hadn't. And it is really important to understand that who you are at your core, whether you call it your soul, or your higher consciousness, whatever you want to call it, that you are not your thoughts, you're not your emotions, and you're not your actions.

And the way that you can think about this, it's fun for me and the way that I learned it. And by the way, when I learned this, this was a little scary, and then also really empowering, it really releases you to change and to transform and to unhook from your thoughts and your emotions. And so the way that you can imagine this is to really think about, or imagine that you are watching a movie, you're in a movie theater, and you're watching a movie, and the movie is your life, right?

On screen is what is happening in the world, and then you are also on the screen, and then your true essence is sitting in the audience, witnessing, watching what is going on. And you have intimate knowledge about that main character you about what they are thinking, and how they are feeling, you know, the backstory of that character, you understand why they're behaving the way they're behaving, you know, what happened in the past, you know, the thoughts that they were brought up with the culture, the parenting, and you know, how they are feeling. And as the watcher called the director of this movie, at any time, you can call cut, and you can reset your character, you may not be able to reset the scene, the world is going to do what the world is going to do, you may be able to influence it. But you always, always, always can reset the character. And that is what thought management and thinking on purpose is all about.

So the first step to managing your thinking and managing your mind and creating your thoughts is to be aware to know that you can witness and that you can watch and see what's going on, and to do it with curiosity, and interest, and to watch and witnessed your life and who you are in it. without judgment. You want to be curious. And a key component of being a good director, or being a good watcher or witness is asking questions and asking good questions. So ask why would this character be thinking this or behaving in a certain way? What are they feeling? What is going on? Is it actually serving the character? Is it serving you to think in this particular way? And if the answer is no, then you have the opportunity, if you so choose to change what you were thinking.

And then another great question would be well, what else might they be thinking? So I'll tell you that I am working with someone who was sharing frustration about a partner who after months and months of counseling, wasn't changing their communication style, they were really focused on using this particular process of communication. And this person was repeating the same patterns over and over and over again. And then the client that I was talking with was extremely frustrated over this. And it really was bothering him. And so I said, hey, why does this bother you at all? And so he eventually said, Because obviously, she doesn't care enough about this relationship to institute these changes to follow this particular protocol. And then I asked him, is that thought serving you? And when I asked that question, it puts him in the director's seat. So now he gets to watch his own thinking? And the answer is no, it clearly is not. Because it was making him anxious, and even more upset with her. And it was making him less intimate with her and less connected with her. And his thoughts about her not being willing to put in the work and make changes created a lot of emotions in him that also contributed to him not being his best self in that relationship and not growing.

So when we take a moment to ask the right questions, and step back and look at our own thoughts with curiosity, it can be mind-blowing. And we realize sometimes that we are sabotaging the thing that we want the most. Now, here's the warning here. The tendency when we start doing this work is to hurry up and to change the thoughts or to really judge ourselves about having that thought in the first place. And that is not what this is about.

Remember, curiosity, compassion. You are just watching the movie and just trying to understand it to start with and to have compassion for the characters, have compassion for yourself, have compassion for the other people in your movie. And what you will notice is that you will see thoughts that you don't like, you'll have thoughts like, I'm not good enough. I'm never gonna lose the weight. I'm never gonna be able to quit drinking. I'm not as talented as that person. I am an imposter. I hope they never figure out that I really don't belong in this position or whatever's coming up for you. When those thoughts come up, we want to greet them with compassion. Say ah, there you are. Hello, and you just want to know what is going on in your head, what is going on in that character's head. And so this is more than just being mindful. This is about becoming mindful of your mind, and really thinking about what is going on in there and understanding why you think, what you think and asking great questions, and then deciding if you want to continue thinking in that way because all thoughts are optional.

And that is a key component to this. And to understand that at once I noticed what is going on in there, then I can decide if I want to keep it. And here's something that's really interesting. And that is that our brains have been pre-programmed, inadvertently, without our consciousness, not deliberately. And if you have not been consciously telling your brain what to think, then it will just think that thoughts. It is always thought it will think the thoughts that you were taught by your parents, and your culture, and your experiences. And your brain will just keep on thinking those without any questions. So when you can stand back and start recognizing, Wait, I can see what I'm thinking, I can discover what I'm thinking. And then I can see how it impacts my emotions. And I can see how it impacts my actions, then I am able to change whatever I choose to change. And this in and of itself is amazing.

So that is step one to come with compassion and curiosity and think about what you were thinking, create a new level of self awareness. So then after that people like, okay, now what now that I know that I am aware of all of the crappy emotions that I am feeling. And the reason that I'm feeling is because I am thinking thoughts that are not great. And I'm really mindful of them. Now, what do I do?

So first and foremost, know that when you are willing to do that when you have the courage to flip the light switch on inside your own brain, that you have already done an extremely important step that most people honestly do not know about. And that's to recognize your own thoughts. And so many people do not understand that they have the ability to do that. And then secondarily that those thoughts are choices.

So just even understanding that it is your thoughts that are making you feel a certain way and that those thoughts are optional, is huge. And that's really where the second step comes in. And this is where you can design your thoughts on purpose. And this is the key to mind management is that now you've identified are, that's what I'm thinking, I know what it's creating in my body and how it's influencing my actions. Now I get to decide what I want to think on purpose, so that I can create the emotions and actions, and results that I do want. And as I said before, if you do not tell your brain what to focus on, or what to think about, then it is just going to go back into its old patterns, because that's what our brains do. Our brains are designed to be efficient and effective. And our brains like to do what it's really good at. And it's already really good at those older thinking patterns.

So for many of us, unfortunately, those thinking patterns are extremely frustrating producing, frustration producing, and anxiety-producing, and a lot of negative thoughts. And so the second step is to design a new thought on purpose. So what I want to be clear about here is that this is not just about affirmations, although I love affirmations, I think that they are fantastic. In order to create affirmations, you have to have gone through step one, where you recognize I'm having negative thinking. So let me think of something different.

An affirmation is an affirming of yourself and of the world. And I love them, and they work and they are fantastic. And sometimes affirmations can feel like what I call throwing pink paint over a problem, we just are saying, I have a beautiful body, I am prosperous, the world is my oyster, or whatever you come up with. And on some level, your brain is not buying it, your brain is like Yep, just I'm just gonna wait for you to stop affirming this thought. And then I'm gonna jump back into the old thought pattern.

So step two is about designing a thought that is actually believable to you. And this is a really important point. And I like to illustrate it with the example of many of my clients say that when they are standing in front of the mirror, that's when they can really hear some mean thoughts going on in their head, they can hear your ugly, how did you let yourself get this way?

Look at those wrinkles, that's disgusting, you're not gonna look good, people are gonna think that you're not professional. And all of these thoughts that are coming up are not useful. They obviously are not serving somebody's self-confidence.

And so an affirmation might be I have a beautiful body. I'm beautiful just the way that I am. And your brain might be like, No, I'm not buying it. I don't believe that. And so what we do is we create a thought that is actually believable to you. And so replacing that negative self-talk with a believable thought may sound very neutral or even benign. And so it may be you know that I have a body I am in a body this body has served me well for many, many years. Even when I am talking poorly about my body, it is still taking care of me. And so you can see that there is a huge difference between the pink paint unicorn, daisy kind of talking and then actually replacing thoughts that are not serving you with other neutral thoughts. This process is important because what it does is creates space for you to believe in yourself, to believe what you're saying. And to not think I'm just tricking myself, but that I am actually in this moment, I'm going to say something that is true for me.

And this is extremely important to make sure that you are trustworthy to yourself. If you think about it, it's like the trust between that director and the character is that there's got to be trust and rapport. And so when you come up with thoughts that are believable when you take one step up, and you're not trying to go from being really sad to be the happiest person in the world, but just being a little less sad, then you have control over your emotions in a way that you don't then you're just spreading pink paint.

And then the other thing that I would like to share with you about designing your thoughts, is that when you get to this place, you're like, Okay, what else could I be thinking that is true, that sometimes it's not always easy to come up with a true thought. And so one of the things that you can do is to ask yourself, really good questions. So you could say, How can I feel great about myself today? How can I feel better than I did yesterday? How can I contribute to the world and to my own sense of well-being today? And how can I create the best version of myself? And so when you're asking those questions, your brain won't answer them. Your brain can't help but find an answer, you're giving your brain something else to chew on, you are skipping the record of what your brain is trained to do, or what it is trained to think in certain scenarios, and giving it something else to think about. And so if we are asking ourselves questions, like, why do I look like this? When you're looking in the mirror? Why do I look so tired? or Why am I so dumb that I haven't figured this out, then your brain is going to give you answers to those questions.

And it'll give you those other thoughts to think about and go right back into those old thinking patterns.

So what you get to do in this moment is to design thoughts that are believable, and then to ask yourself great questions that will help you be more creative in your answers in a way that is still reasonable and sustainable to you.

So step one is about noticing what is going on and what you were thinking, understanding what is on the movie screen, and knowing that you can choose to think differently. And then step two is about designing specific thoughts on purpose that are true, and that are believable.

And so then that brings us to the third step, which is to dare to use the thought. And what that means is when the opportunity arises, when you are witnessing the movie screen, and you know that you normally are going to go down one thought pattern, that in that moment, that moment in your life, that you are now armed with a new thought, now, you get to practice it. And this may sound a little obvious or even simple. But the reason that it is the third step is because the third step is always about the practice. And when you are in that moment when you are annoyed with your spouse, we're not doing the communication correctly, or you are really irritated with your coworker. And you are feeling upset or angry, your brain is not going to want to think a new thought, your brain is going to want to go back to the old way of thinking.

And this is especially important and difficult during those, "negative emotion times" when we are ready to tell the story that we normally tell. And we've already kind of jumped on the train of the story. And we're going with it and then all of a sudden, we're like, oh, wait, I have a new thought that I can think instead, this is an important place. This is what I call the decision point. And this is where you use change to transform. And what I mean by that is that you now have the opportunity to act differently. And what we're talking about here is acting differently in your own mind. And sometimes we talk about acting differently in terms of the way that you are behaving. But right now you're using the action of changing your mind to transform who you are.

And so the way that that shows up is that if you are in a scenario where you normally are feeling triggered by something that is happening in the outside world, and then you notice that you were feeling triggered, right then is when you get to start processing a new thought. And when you use the change of the world, on purpose, and you start thinking those new thoughts in the moment right there in the trenches.

That is how you begin to transform. And as I said, your brain is not going to want to do it. And so as you are in those moments, I again ask you to have curiosity and compassion with yourself, to listen to what is going on as best as you can, and to do your best in those moments to find your new thought to repeat it over and over and over again, and to use it on purpose.

Because discovering the thoughts and then designing them is great, but until you dare to use them in the real world. It is still just something that you are learning about versus actually transforming yourself. So those are the three steps to thought management to designing your thoughts on purpose. And it's simple, it's extremely simple. And is it easy? No way if it was easy, then you would already have done it. So go forth and create your thoughts on purpose. I would absolutely love to hear how it is going for you.

I hope that you enjoyed today's episode. It's been my pleasure to be here with you and to be in this process with you to share in the practice. It is a practice of being the healthiest and most energized and highly performing leader that you can be. So go forth and create and design your thoughts and create an amazing day. All right, I'll see you guys soon.

Hey there, if you are ready to take your Wellbeingness® to the next level, come visit www.thewellness.coach. We've got lots of free resources and make sure that you type in thewellness.coach and I will see you there.