

## You Are What You Think – So Re-Think

By Gloria Clark

“We live in a very discouraged society with a lot of unhappy people running around, partly because of what is going on in the world and partly because they feel out of control,” observes Catherine VanWetter, a transformational coach. Being in a position to make a significant difference in the world may not be possible, but (and more about that little three-letter word later) being able to make a difference in yourself may be.

“Thinking creates an image, images control feelings, feelings cause actions, and actions create results,” believes the therapist. “If we realized the power of a negative thought, we would never ever entertain one. Our thoughts tend to be transitory; they shift around a lot. Where we get into trouble is when we attach an emotion to the thought we are having. If we listen to particular words people use, then we won’t be surprised to discover how or why it is that someone is miserable.” It will become obvious.

“You Are What You Think – So Re-Think” is a workshop VanWetter has conducted for several years. Since people have between 60,000 and 80,000 thoughts a day, those thoughts can and do influence them in mind as well as in body. Analyzing the vocabulary of someone who is healthy, that is to say a person who is in control of their thoughts, can call attention to the fact that he or she uses words that are uplifting and optimistic. And they show those thoughts, that mindset, in their body language as well, intimates the teacher.

“Some 90 percent of our thoughts are from yesterday since we have the tendency to live so much in the past, and we look so much into the future that we forget this moment which is the present. Sometimes in order to make a change in ourselves on a deep core level, we need to start by looking at our subconscious as if it were a tape recorder that replays thoughts, especially negative ones, that are difficult to erase because positive thoughts create a thin layer that is overwhelmed by the huge layer of negative ones,” year after year.

“Between the ages of two and six, children are downloading everything they see, hear, and feel,” notes VanWetter. “They make wonderful observers and lousy interpreters. Their subconscious is taking in that the world is safe and conversely that it is unsafe. And we are on our way to becoming who we turn out to be. If we hate ourselves now, many times it is where we came from that we actually hate.” Changing the voice and words on the metaphorical tape recorder can be done, not overnight, but (a few words about this word very soon) it happens gradually and surely when deep issues are confronted and re-thought about with our maturity of observation and interpretation.

“If you change the way you look at your history, you change your thoughts. If you change your thoughts, you change your life,” asserts VanWetter. “Our body remembers everything, it does not forget anything.” As your thoughts change, this changing causes a difference in the body, too. Deep change comes about with the difference and intention in the words used in conversation. As those new words and thoughts become a habit, the body is subtly aware of it.

“Using the word “but” cuts off the flow of a thought so that we hear only what comes after it,” claims the holder of a master’s degree in social work. “Using the word “and” connects the thoughts and is more congruent.” Instead of separating the thoughts so that part of what is said is lost, “and” brings the thoughts together in a positive way rather than a negative one. Eliminating “should,” “would,” “could,” “have to,” and “need to” from one’s vocabulary also is considered desirable in creating a positive aura around oneself.

“So often people use negative terminology. As a collective, a society, many are unhappy and a number are on antidepressants, thinking that a pill is going to make them happy. Working at their deepest insecurity issues and how they think can effect the change” they seem to be looking for, whether or not they are able to acknowledge or articulate precisely what it is. VanWetter says a professional’s help may be needed and advantageous in assisting the person to define the issues causing the distress.

“If we want to see what tomorrow is going to look like, take a look today at your thoughts. It’s as if they were on a treadmill and never get off so as far as they are concerned, life never changes, yet we know that things are always changing around us,” says the woman who conducts individual and group sessions throughout the Northwest.

“It’s not so much the words we use as it is the feeling deep within our heart. We can teach ourselves to change our thoughts,” to overcome the negative ones and focus on positive ones. Though this change in thought patterns may appear to be difficult, perhaps insurmountable, it is nonetheless possible and ultimately rewarding. Such a change can signal the end of a self-fulfilling prophecy which perpetuates negativity.

For more information about VanWetter’s teachings and workshops, go to [Catherine@courageconsultants.net](mailto:Catherine@courageconsultants.net) or [www.courageconsultants.net](http://www.courageconsultants.net).