



## Thoughts Determine Behaviors

The way that you think about someone or something determines the way you react to that person or that thing.

**When you think the same way, you react the same way.**

If you think someone's judging you, your face may look strained, or you may clench your jaw and furrow your eyebrows without even noticing it. Your tone may also be defensive (to self-protect) if the person makes a comment that you feel is an attack, and your body language is also more likely to be uptight if you're feeling cautious and guarded, weighing every word that you're saying and every move that you're making.

On the other hand, if you think that someone enjoys your company and genuinely enjoys being around you, you're more likely to be relaxed around this person, speaking and acting freely without overthinking what you're saying. You may tend to laugh more with more relaxed facial expressions, a calm tone and relaxed, open body language.

So how in the world do you extinguish the flames of fury and frustration so that you can relax and enjoy someone's company, even in the most escalated situations?

It starts in your mind first. The next time you're upset, ***pause before you pounce*** and ask yourself, "How do I need to think about this person or this situation differently?"

As another example, if you go into an interview thinking that you're not qualified and that everybody is going to be judging you, you're much more likely to be nervous and to come across as shaky and lacking confidence.

What if, instead, you adopted an attitude of, "I'm going to enjoy their company and they'll enjoy mine. The butterflies I'm feeling lets me know that I'm excited, because it's always exciting to meet new people."

When your mindset going into the interview is focused on how warm and friendly the environment will be and how the interviewers are rooting for you to do well, your nerves will

begin to calm down, and you are less likely to have that wide-eyed emoji panic face after every question they ask.

Even if you're not chosen for the job, reframe the outcome. Remind yourself that this company is not rejecting you as a person, it's simply not the best fit at this time for you or for them, and that's OK because you haven't lost anything...you've *gained* experience.

When de-escalating conflict, replace any thoughts that the person doesn't like you or is judging you as a person with thoughts that he or she is simply upset at the situation and is reacting to buttons that he/she feels have been pushed.

This is the technique that I personally used to stop taking everything to heart and to stop rolling the person's comments over and over in my mind on a hamster wheel of hurt.

I would ask myself, "Are you kind? Helpful? Thoughtful? Do you care about the feelings of others and not just your own? Do you look for the good in people?" If I could answer "yes" to each one, then I said to myself:

***"His/Her emotions and thoughts are not my emotions and thoughts. I am doing the best I can and release what \_\_\_\_\_ (person's name) thinks of me."***

If you find yourself answering "no" to any of those questions, identify the behaviors that would lead to a "yes" and be intentional about implementing those behaviors, starting today.

We all make decisions or display certain behaviors at times that need to be corrected, however recognizing that and correcting those specific behaviors is very different than saying, "I'm a horrible person."

**Focus on changing the behaviors, and you'll keep your self-worth intact.**

As you get ready to head into the week, remember that your reactions to the people and situations around you are determined by the way you think about these people and situations.

Change your thoughts first – practice thinking like a loving, calm, caring, confident, open-minded person, *especially* when you're around a person or situation that used to light your hair on fire – and watch as your behaviors follow suit.

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