

Shift Happens

"one thought at a time"

www.theshiftmovement.org

To empower and assist 16-24 year olds in embracing opportunities, experiences and learning to resourcefully act and react to life situations.

Blake (20) – "Brett, I just finished all your thoughts. I am so challenged and now I realize how much of my identity/comfort/security I need to let go of because of how unhealthy it is. You're killing me, it's that brilliant! So excited for this to be published and share it with my friends! Congratulations you have ruined and then rebuilt my life! I love it!"

by Brett White (c) 2015

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Books quoted, recommended or referred to:

The Success Principles, by Jack Canfield (Harper Collins)
Mindset, by Dr Carol S Dweck (Robinson)
Letting Go, by David R Hawkins (Veritas Publishing)
Growing Yourself Up, by Jenny Brown (Exisle Publishing)
Daring Greatly, by Brene Brown (Penguin)
Pathways to success & happiness, by Sharon Pearson (The Coaching Institute, Melbourne)
Your Success, by Sharon Pearson (The Coaching Institute, Melbourne)

Special thanks to Sharon Pearson and The Coaching Institute for all the input, challenges and learning I have received that has impacted, grown and developed me in brilliant ways.

Dedicated to my amazing children, Bella (18) & Max (15)

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Committed to young people

Often we walk through our lives with no real awareness of the limiting thoughts we carry, and that's one thing I am passionate about, helping young people become aware and then creating change around their internal thought patterns. So empowering and so freeing.

For the last few years, I have been working with, and alongside young people to help them create positive change in their lives. Through workshops, events, relationships and one-on-one coaching, I have engaged in a journey of empowering young people with fresh thinking and then seeing their relationships, work, health, study, well-being and self-worth transformed.

It started with my daughter when she was 16, and a conversation we were having over our regular dad and daughter lunch. She was fascinated, challenged and encouraged by some of my personal learnings and life principles I was sharing with her. Together we agreed to step out and create some opportunities for her friends to hear about it, and "the SHiFT Movement" was born. We are constantly seeing the lives and worlds of young people transformed through shifting the way they think, and it is brilliant.

*The best way to approach this book is **one thought at a time**. Read a thought, and then re-read the thought and work through the exercises and new thinking suggestions. Allow time to contemplate and create understanding and awareness before you move into the next thought. Enjoy the journey.*

**one new thought can
create powerful change.**

opening thought

If you are a young person around 16-24 then this little book is specifically for you. You are in an interesting and often challenging journey of transition where your beliefs, identity and behaviours are being questioned. This development of who you are and who you will become is a critical phase of life.

Most of our internal culture is created between the ages of 0-7, influenced primarily by parents, siblings, family environments and a few significant adults. Then between the ages of 7-15 these internal beliefs are tweaked, adjusted and finally formed through peers, school experiences and other significant adults in your life such as sports coaches, teachers, youth leaders etc.

Finally between the ages of 16-24 these thoughts, beliefs and behaviours are challenged and refined to form your most powerful resource in life ... your internal culture. This book is about giving you the tools, ideas and thoughts that can empower you in this season of life to create understanding and resources to transform the way you think.

Everything starts with a thought, and these thoughts have the power to create the future and life you dream of. If applied, you can shape a much more resourceful, helpful and effective internal culture that will serve you and your relationships brilliantly.

I am grateful for the life I have lived, but I would have loved to have known these things at 18 years of age. I have seen the power of these thoughts change young people's lives immediately. I trust you will read, learn and then begin to create and develop the kind of self-culture that will give you the foundation for getting the outcomes and results you really want in life.

Experience life from a new perspective.

Tahlia(18) – “Life changing. A new perspective on life which will develop a new and better me.”

Beth (18) – “A confronting yet eye opening and encouraging experience that gave me new insights and skills on how to live and love myself and stay strong in this sometimes discouraging world.”

Luke (17) – “It was an incredible and life changing experience that is going to change me for the better. So worth it.

thought one: **line thinking**

Living above the line will **strengthen you**, give you greater **courage and confidence** in the journey we call life, **now and in the future.**

In its simplest form, there are two ways people think, either above the line or below the line. Our attitudes, behaviours, physiology, emotions and responses are quite different above or below the line. When we think above the line, we make better decisions, react and respond healthier to what life throws at us, and we interact with people and life more effectively. The challenge for each of us is to become aware of our thinking, and shift it from below to above. Remember that almost everything starts with a thought, both conscious thoughts and unconscious ones.

Everyone has experiences that are not positive in life journey. Dealing with grief, heartbreak, betrayal, loss, disappointment and suffering. Living above the line enables and empowers a fresh perspective, develops a deeper resilience, confidence, courage and a desire to stay on track and be internally positive. Below the line thinking will look at the event or the circumstance as the source of whatever you are feeling and experiencing. The external event is only about 10% of the source of your experience, but the much bigger source (90%) is your inside reality. Your inner world, your internal thinking and whether you are living above or below the line.

When we think below the line, we make poorer decisions, judgments and choices. We can react badly to conflict, and respond unhealthily to challenges. We can slowly become entrenched in a spiral downwards of dysfunctional behaviour, depression and ultimately isolation. Below the line thinking is at times easier, and it certainly takes less effort and appears to be quite acceptable in our culture today.

There are three primary elements to each way of thinking that can help us identify if we are living and thinking above or below the line.

B.E.D is for below the line thinking and stands for **1/ blame, 2/ excuses and 3/ denial**. Below the line thinking is usually connected to one of these three elements. It's everything or everyone else's fault. We blame our parents, our boss, the government, our partner, our friend or our circumstances for our behaviour or choices.

The truth is though; we are 100% responsible for our behaviour, and our choices. (Unless you are forced) It is up to us. When we learn to take responsibility for our behaviour, actions and choices, we are empowered in life.

You have little control over others, and it is much easier and more effective to work on and change your own inner world, than it is to try and change the external events, circumstances or people (Like your parents, teachers, job, etc)

You can't change your upbringing. You can't change your past. You can however create, determine and change your future, by changing the way you think.

The reality is, we all go below the line, I do, you do ... everyone does. However, there is a big difference between living and visiting, and where you are most of the time is where you live. I am not saying that if you just think positive, everything will be better, that the pain will go away, or that life will always be wonderful. No. That is not what this is about. Life will throw crap your way. You will hurt. You will go through hard times. *The way you think will empower you in that journey though, to deal with, cope with, process and navigate life in a healthier and more effectively way.*

O.A.R is for above the line thinking and stands for **ownership, action** and **resourceful**. Here we take ownership for our behaviour, take action to change our thinking, and then our thinking becomes resourceful to our journey. Living above the line will strengthen you, give your greater courage and confidence in the journey we call life, now and in the future.

If you think above the line, you take 100% responsibility for everything you are creating in your life. Even the things you don't like. Below the line we have blame, excuses, and denial. Above the line, we have ownership and results. Below the line it's about what happens to you that determines your life; the hurt, the disappointment, the mistake, the broken heart, the missed opportunity etc. Above the line, it's about what happens in you, not to you, which determines and directs your life.

Here are some more ideas about the difference between the two ways to think:

ABOVE THE LINE		
Acceptance Hero Choice Hope Respond	Love Results At cause 100% responsibility Solution	Clarity Feedback Peace Action Ownership
Judgement Victim Stuck Hopeless React	Fear Excuses At effect Blame Problem	Vague Failure Turmoil Procrastination Denial
BELOW THE LINE		

Exercise: Grab a pen, or use your phone notes, and write down five areas of your life (or common situations) where you tend to live below the line. (i.e. blame others or circumstances, make excuses for your behaviour, or maybe even deny there's a problem at all)

Eg: your study environment – I blame the teacher or the learning environment, it's their fault. I create excuses around my ability, time or intelligence. I am not smart enough, or I don't have enough time, etc.

Now decide on the **above the line** thinking approach and take charge of your world.

thought two: **meaning thinking**

We tend to hold onto the **negative emotion** and make it about us, instead of the **positive learnings**, and there are always **both** in almost **every experience**.

This second thought is based around this statement: **nothing has meaning except the meaning you give it**. When I first heard this statement, I must admit I wasn't all that convinced. The more I have processed it and applied it to my life, the more I have realised its truth and power to transform.

I think the reason I wasn't convinced was because I have been around long enough to know that suffering can be a 'normal and inevitable' part of life. But as I studied further, I learnt that hope and new meaning could be found in the midst of suffering. One amazing example I came across was from a concentration camp survivor called Victor Frankl who helped his fellow prisoners to find meaning in the midst of severe suffering. He realized that no matter the circumstance in life there is the ability to: find something to hope for, turn suffering into some type of accomplishment or learning, change oneself for the better and even take some responsible action. Suffering and pain are a real part of life, and for some of you reading this you may very well have experienced significant trauma, grief or pain. This thought does not minimize that pain, it gives hope in the midst of it. "*There are only two things that pierce the human heart. One is beauty. The other is affliction.*" Simone Weil. Beauty and affliction, and the meaning we give these two parts of our journey, will ultimately determine the quality of our life.

There are many other stories similar to Victor's that testify to the fact that there is always potential for new growth and understanding – even in the midst of heartache and trials. It's stories like this and others that led to me believe that it's never an event or experience in your life that is going to shape you; it's the meaning you give to that event that will ultimately create your outcomes and results.

But it's not just big events that derail a person, it's often the meaning we give small events that dictate and shape our actions. Ten people could all go through the same experience, let's say they fail an important exam, and all of the ten people could give that experience a totally different meaning. One form of meaning might be: I am stupid, I am not good enough, I will never understand this, or I can't do this. The other might go like this: I really didn't study enough, need to put in more effort, this has shown me some areas I need to work on or I really need to get some help in this area. These meanings will determine the response and outcome of your experiences.

We are the ones who decide on the meaning; it's totally our choice. I have had clients that have walked through the most traumatic experiences, but have experienced beautiful freedom by simply applying a new meaning to the same experience. Sounds simple doesn't it, and in many ways it is. We do choose the meaning we give to our experiences and what I have noticed is that the meaning we often give a hurtful or difficult experience, is negative and unresourceful. We tend to hold onto the negative emotion and make it about us, instead of the positive learnings, and there are always both in almost every experience.

There is a great little formula, from Jack Canfield's book, the Success Principles that is easy to remember, and has been very life changing for me: $E + R = O$

I have developed this a little further because I believe the M, which is the meaning, is critical in determining the R, the response, and therefore the O, the outcome.

$$E + Mr = O$$

The **E** is for the experience or event, and this could be anything. Something someone says, a critical comment, rejection, betrayal, a failed exam, a mistake in a relationship, a misunderstood text, a disappointment, the weather, a teacher's attitude or a childhood trauma. In other words, anything that is outside of your control to change or control. The **E** is unchangeable, because it has already happened, but here is the good news, we get to choose the meaning (**M**) we attach to the event, it is 100% our choice.

The meaning we choose to give to the event, always determines our response (**R**), which always leads to our outcome (**O**). So if we are not happy with the outcomes we are walking in, it's time to have a look at the meaning we have given the experience or event.

I'll give you an example about this. 21-year-old Amber was quite unfairly and rudely criticised for something she had done, by a friend at a night out. Amber gave this event the following meaning: *I am clearly not a good friend; there is something wrong with me, and I am a bad person who is never good enough.* Her response to that meaning was sadness, withdrawal and tears, which led to her outcome of feeling anxious and alone. I asked her about the meaning, and if there might be a meaning that could serve her more resourcefully. I have a few meaning questions I ask people that would be worth remembering. 1/ what might be a more resourceful meaning you could give this event? 2/ What meaning would you advise a friend to give to the same type of event? 3/ what meaning might someone who has effectively walked through a similar event give it?

After some reflection and discussion Amber reframed her meaning (M): *my friend spoke out of her insecurity with little understanding of what happened. I am a good friend, as many people have affirmed this to me before and finally, there are some things I can do to improve and learn from this that will grow me into an even better friend.* Her response (R) was empowering, and her outcome (O) became one of satisfaction, learning and growth. Powerful transformation.

We have 100% responsibility and choice for the stories and meanings we create.

We can change the outcomes we are experiencing if we change the meaning and response to the event. If you are happy with your outcomes and results then that's brilliant, but if you desire better, greater and more resourceful outcomes and results in areas of your life, then look at the meaning you have given to an event or experience. When you change the meaning, the response will change and you will always get a different outcome.

Exercise: Grab a pen, or use your phone notes, and write down an area of your life that you would love to experience a more resourceful outcome for. Write down the meaning you have

given to the event or experience that is creating the outcome, and then reframe the meaning so that it serves you and your future. Ask the questions I stated earlier:

1/ What might be a more resourceful meaning you could give this event?

2/ What meaning would you advise a friend to give to the same type of experience?

3/ What meaning might someone who has effectively walked through a similar event give it?

thought three: **focused thinking**

She changed her focus and therefore was able to create incredible change in what she was experiencing.

What a brilliant shift!

What you focus on is what you get, to the exclusion of everything else. What you're focusing on currently in your life is determining what you are getting more of. This thought is true for everybody.

For example if you spend a lot of time focusing on your problems, or what you don't have or the things that are going wrong, do you notice that you start feeling even worse about yourself and get irritated or frustrated? What you focus on most will be what you keep getting more of.

When you focus on all the problems and frustration, the irritation and everything else that comes with it, what are you excluding? You are excluding all the solutions. Think about it. If you focus on gratitude, solutions, opportunity, etc. then that's what you'll start experiencing more of in your life.

I want you to imagine for a moment that you're in a massive warehouse where every potential and every possibility exists. There is abundance and there is lack, there are problems and there are solutions. There is self-love and self-harm. There is fun and laughter, and there's isolation and withdrawal.

Now you only have a small torch, and where you shine your torch – and I'm being metaphorical – will impact your outcomes. If you shine your torch in one corner, you might notice only failure and what happens is that your subconscious mind thinks, *“that means this warehouse is filled with failure”*. You'll make what's called a generalisation. You'll assume that everything else is the same because you are experiencing it in this one corner. Then the entire warehouse is filled with the same experience.

Now take that same torch and shine it in another corner, and notice the great feedback for growth. If you only focus your torch there your subconscious mind will think – *“Ah, the warehouse is filled with great feedback, not failure”*.

They're both right because both sides of everything exist within the warehouse. It's where you choose to shine your torch, and what you decide to focus on. It would be great if we could just switch the lights on and have the whole warehouse in view and see everything that is there, but that isn't how our mind works. The mind is constantly searching for what we are familiar with and what aligns with your internal worldview. If we believe we are a failure, or always fail, that's what we will focus on. We delete, distort and generalise everything that doesn't align itself with our beliefs and thoughts ... even your limiting thoughts.

For example, 18-year-old Jody was walking through a hard time of grief, due to the devastating loss of her dad. The grief and pain were real, and she needed to walk through this time in a healthy way. It was important not to ignore the reality of her pain and loss, but it was starting to affect her deeply in some unhealthy ways. Through talking with her, we

discovered that most of her focus was on guilt and disappointment and that she was focusing entirely on the last three months of her relationship with her dad. That's where she was shining her torch, and she was getting more and more guilt and disappointment, which was leading her into depression. It is important to walk through the grief, but it is also important what we focus on in that journey. By shifting her focus onto the great things in her relationship, looking at the whole story and not just a small negative part, she began to experience a massive internal shift. From guilt to a sense of peace, which actually gave her the freedom to grieve well and walk through that season with a sense of pride in her relationship, and a greater sense of hope for what was ahead. Was she still sad and devastated by the loss of her dad, absolutely, but she had a deepening internal strength that empowered her journey in a healthy way.

Jody changed her focus, therefore she was able to create incredible change in what she was experiencing.

Problems and solutions both exist. Your focus determines what you experience more of. Self-worth and self-harm both exist ... your focus determines what you experience.

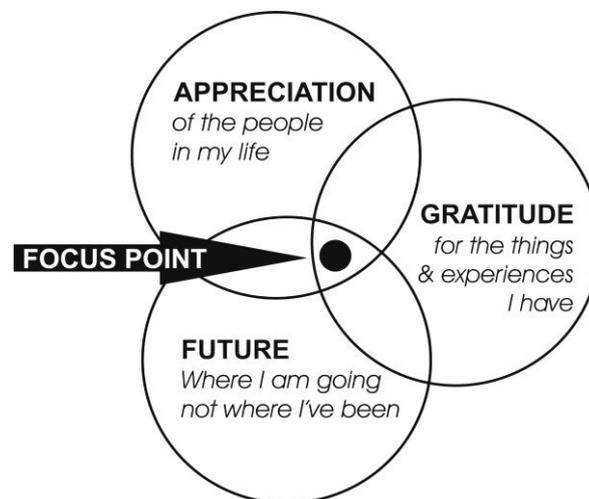
Self-love or Self-hate
Abundance or Lack
What I have or what I don't have
Gratitude or complaining
Solutions or problems
The positive or the negative
I can or I can't
I have what it takes or I am not good enough
Love or fear
Effort or giving up
Forgiveness or Bitterness
Calm or chaos
Feedback or failure
Acceptance or judgement
Results or excuses
Hero or victim
Choice or blame
Humility or pride
Peace or anger

What you focus on is what you get, to the exclusion of everything else.

What are you choosing to search for? Where are you placing your focus? What do you seek out in your life? Ask yourself what you keep getting more of and if it's negative, unhelpful or unresourceful, then shift your focus.

Focus on what you can control and influence, rather than what you can't. Focus on what you want to experience in life, where you want to go, who you want to become and how you're going to get there.

Take a moment and write down some of the things you think you are focused on that might be unresourceful to you and your journey, and then begin to look for the solution, the positive and the resourceful. Write down your new focus and begin a new chapter of your life in what you get more of.



A good starting point is to look at the diagram above, and focus your torch on the three areas in the large circles. 1/ **who** is in your life that you appreciate, and what do you appreciate about them. 2/ **what** things and experiences can you be grateful for in your life and journey. This is a very powerful tool to help your mind to start looking for the positives in life. Writing down three **new** things you are grateful for **everyday** will over time create a shift in what you notice. Instead of your mind searching for lack, or negatives, or what you don't have, your mind begins searching for the positives. 3/ Focus on **where** you are going, or where you want to be, and who you want to become.

When you focus on these three things, your **focus point** becomes empowering and resourceful to you and your journey.

thought four: **mindset thinking.**

How you **interpret** challenges, setbacks, and criticism is your **choice.**

Dr. Carol Dweck's writing and research in the area of mindsets is brilliant, and I have been teaching her material to young people with great results. In its simplest form we either have one of two different mindsets, **fixed or growth.**

Depending on a number of things like your upbringing and schooling, we develop one of these two opposing mindsets. The "growth mindset" creates a passion for learning and "fixed mindset creates a desire for approval. A growth mindset believes that human qualities like intelligence and creativity and even relational capacities like love and friendship, can be grown and developed through effort and practice. A fixed mindset believes these qualities are set in stone.

I have discovered that in the groups I have taught that about 75% of young people have a fixed mindset in at least one area of their life. I have discovered that the majority of young people I work with will have either a fixed or growth mindset across all areas of their life: intellect, personality, creativity and socially, etc. There are the exceptions that have both, for example, a fixed mindset in intellect but a growth mindset in say creativity or sport.

The big difference between the two mindsets is this:

Fixed mindset – believes that your intellect, talent, personality and creativity, etc. is fixed, set in stone and immovable, and therefore, you have what you have, and it can never change. The outcome of this mindset is a constant need to prove yourself and your fixed amount of talent or intellect. **As a result, you may plateau early and achieve less than your full potential.** I've seen many people with this one track mind of proving themselves—in the classroom, in their careers, and in their relationships. Every situation calls for approval and validation of their intelligence, personality, talent or personality. Every experience or event is evaluated: Will I succeed or fail? Will I look smart or dumb? Will I be accepted or rejected? Will I feel like a winner or a loser?

Growth mindset – believes that your intellect, talent, personality and creativity, etc. is fluid, which means it can grow, develop and change. The outcome of this mindset is the desire to learn and grow, which is empowering to your journey in life. **As a result, you reach even higher levels of achievement in life.**

There is a lot of information that I could write here but I want to keep this simple and short, and focus on three significant differences that Dweck identifies between the two mindsets and then how to develop a growth mindset to empower your life. When I first began to research the mindset theories, I realised that I was predominantly a fixed mindset person, and have been developing my growth mindset ever since.

Remember that most of your thinking and response around these things is going on in your subconscious mind, until awareness is created, which is what we're doing here.

1/ Challenge: fixed mindset tries to avoid challenges, unless they are completely confident they can get it right. Challenges become a threat that might expose to others that they are not as good as they thought. The growth mindset embraces challenges because they see it as an opportunity to learn and grow, to become even better. The fixed mindset will give up easily when it gets tough, because they don't believe they can be better or different, so why risk failing or looking silly. The growth mindset loves the challenge and persists when things get tough, because they believe they can grow, and they are excited by that possibility.

2/ Effort: fixed mindset sees effort as fruitless and therefore will often only put in the bare necessity of effort into anything. They believe their ability is set in stone, and no amount of effort is going to change that, so minimum effort is often the outcome. The growth mindset believes that effort creates growth and is the pathway toward success. They believe that the more effort you put in, the greater the results, outcomes and achievement you can experience. This is one reason it is important to praise, appreciate and celebrate effort, not simply results, which empowers the growth mindset.

3/ Failure & criticism: fixed mindset sees failure as fatal and therefore can avoid taking risks or trying new things that they are not guaranteed to succeed at. The growth mindset has a healthier view, seeing failure as feedback to help them grow and develop. They are open to constructive criticism because it is a pathway for learning and growth. The fixed mindset believes they are already as good as they can be and therefore ignore useful feedback and criticism, and often see it as an attack.

Shifting Mindsets: (adapted from: Mindset | How can you change from a fixed mindset to a growth ... (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.mindsetonline.com/changeyourmindset/firststeps>)

1/ Awareness – Being aware is the first step in this journey. Have a look at how you respond to challenges, effort, the success of others and criticism. An honest appraisal here will give you some indication of your mindset around life.

2/ Realise you have a choice - How you understand challenges, setbacks, and criticism is actually a choice. You can decide from a fixed mindset, and see them as an indication that your talents or abilities are lacking. Or you can take them in a growth mindset as an indication that you need to ramp up your effort, stretch yourself, and expand your abilities. It's up to you.

3/ Listen to your self-talk and begin to change it: for example

Challenges - Fixed mindset: *“What if I fail—I will be a failure, and I don't want people to know that about me”*. Growth mindset: *“Successful people have failures along the way too, but they don't see them as fatal, but great feedback toward success.”*

Effort - Fixed mindset: *“That would be easy if I already had the skill.”* Growth mindset: *“Football wasn't easy for Tim Cahill and music wasn't just easy for Kylie Minogue. They had a passion and put in lots of effort to get the results they achieved.”*

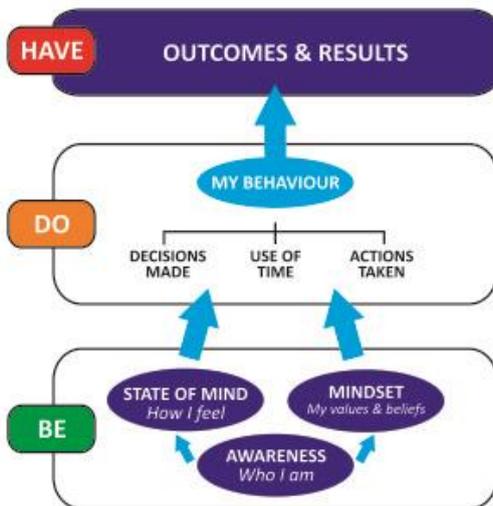
Criticism – Fixed Mindset: *“It wasn't my fault. It was something or someone else's fault.”* Growth Mindset: *“If I don't take responsibility, I can't fix it. Let me listen and learn whatever I can to develop myself further.”*

As you can see, **developing a growth mindset will empower your personal development,** relationships and success across all areas of life, and help you reach your greatest potential.

Follow the three steps above and think about where you might have a fixed or growth mindset, and work on some new thinking to help shift the way you think.

thought five: **Be thinking**

The **BE** component to the equation is about **who you are**,
and who you want to become.
It is about your beliefs, values and mindsets.



One of the life changing conversations I have with people is around the idea of **BE – DO – HAVE**. Our culture is very HAVE-DO-BE driven and when we focus on the DO or more often the HAVE as the first response we will never get the outcomes we want on a sustainable level. How many times have you heard it said, or thought to yourself, “When I have more time, when I get married, when I find a girlfriend, when I finish school, when I get a job, when I move out of home ... then I will be _____ (insert result desired). Eg. I could say, “*When I **have** more time, then I will be able to **do** more with the kids and then I will **be** a better dad*”. The reality is, to get the results I really want; I have to start with who I want to be, and then create the doing from there. I want to **BE** a great dad, so what can I **DO** to

make that happen. When we are focused on the doing part we will think things like, “*if I do more, achieve more, work more, strive harder etc then I will get the results I desire in my life*”. Focusing on doing, action and achievement without first reflecting on the BE may change the results you get, **but it won’t ultimately bring the transformation to your life you’re looking for and need.**

One of the things I continue to notice through my conversations with people is the incredible focus they have on doing. There seems to be a general belief that it’s the doing that will produce the results and outcomes we want in life. There is, of course, much truth in this because **without action things will never change.**

I heard the comment once, “*that you can be on the right track but if you just sit there and do nothing you will still get run over by the train*”.

So yes, action is critical to results, to change, to transformation and to overcoming fear. Without action, the doing part of the equation, we will never get the results and outcomes we desire. The thing is, the doing is the second part, not the first, and this is where I see people getting stuck over and over again.

The BE component to the equation is about who you are, and who you want to be. It is about your beliefs, values and mindsets. It’s about your state of mind and emotions. Asking the BE question is all about the internal, and the DO is about the external. **Address the external and you will see a change, address the internal, and you will experience transformation.**

Focusing on the BE is a deeper level of awareness that will powerfully impact a person's behaviour, which is what is currently giving them their outcomes.

Who do I want to be? What kind of boyfriend, student, daughter, brother, leader and friend do I want to be? Who am I now, and who do I want to become? Becoming is where the power is. Our BE always drives our behaviours (The DO), which ultimately determines our outcomes (the HAVE). *See the diagram above.*

So if you are not getting the results or outcomes you want in life, have a look at who you are being. In relationships, work, career, study, romance, friendship, self-love, finances, fitness or health, start with the BE and don't get caught up in the achievement trap, the doing more dilemma or the striving strategy. Stop waiting until you have something you think you need to be happy, successful or free ... start now by focusing on your BE.

Step 1 – I want to become Eg. a great friend

Step 2 - to become a great friend I need to **be** more Eg. Internally confident (*keep it focused on the BE .. not what you need to do yet*)

Step 3 – to become internally confident for me would mean that I will ... Eg. Engage, listen and be present when conflict situations come up. (*Always state what you want, not what you don't want to keep it positive, so don't say "I will not withdraw or I will not get defensive"*) Remember too that becoming internally confident will mean different things to different people, so asking what would it mean and look like to you is critical. This is just an example.

Step 4 – to achieve this I will ... Eg. Immediately re-frame my meaning around conflict (seeing it as a positive opportunity for growth instead of negative interruption); next time I am confronted with conflict I will intentionally engage in a positive way and reflect on my key learnings; Over the next month I will work on creating new meanings around conflict that are resourceful and helpful to my journey and to others; Over the next 3 months I will intentionally grow in my awareness around my internal thoughts that are limiting me from dealing with conflict in a healthy way, and change them.

Exercise:

Work through the above four steps in an area of becoming who you really want to be.

thought six: **thought thinking**

By the time we are 17 we have heard, *you can't, you shouldn't and you're wrong*, around 75,000 times.

Ultimately our internal thoughts about ourselves are either limiting or empowering. They either help us, or they hinder us. Trap us or transform us. You get the picture. Our subconscious mind, which is about 96% of our mind, is where our behaviours and beliefs come from. We may not even be aware that we are being guided by a bunch of thoughts and beliefs about ourselves that are limiting us in our study, sport, relationships, finances, health and general well-being. We all have thoughts that limit us, therefore by creating awareness and change around these thoughts, we can strongly empower ourselves. I say thoughts because every belief you have, started with a thought.

Tony Robbins says, *“All personal breakthroughs begin with a change in beliefs. The moment we begin to honestly question our beliefs and the experiences we assign to them, we no longer feel absolutely certain about them. This opens the door to replacing your old, disempowering beliefs with new beliefs that support you in the direction you want to go.”*

Most of our limiting thoughts are formed before we are seven years of age, and then tweaked, developed and established by the time we are fourteen. As adults, the limiting thoughts we developed as children become the filter, and belief by which we see life, love, relationships, success, money, conflict, communication and happiness. Some of these beliefs are empowering and resourceful to us, but many become limiters that stop us from truly flourishing in life.

Here are some limiting thoughts I have encountered in young people I have coached and journeyed alongside, and some in myself: *I am not good enough, I don't deserve good things, it's always my fault, I am stupid, I can't do that, I won't succeed, I am not smart enough, I never get chosen, I can't do anything right, I am always wrong, I am too sensitive, I don't belong anywhere, I will never make it, my feelings don't matter, I can't be loved, I am a bitch, I am the black sheep, I am too weak, I am too shy, I am not worth it, I am not creative enough ...* and so on and so on.

Often we walk through our lives with no real awareness of the limiting thoughts we carry, and that's one thing I am passionate about, helping young people become aware and then creating change around the internal thought patterns. So empowering and so freeing.

So what thoughts could you be carrying that might be limiting you? Any of the above feel familiar or maybe you have your own to add to that list. *I have included an example below.*

1/ Write them down, or the one or two that you feel could be limiting you the most.

2/ Then write down how this thought is limiting you.

3/ Now write down how you want to be or feel or behave, in light of the new thought.

4/ Write down a positive empowering thought statement around the belief.

For example: let's say the limiting thought is "*my opinions don't matter*".

This is limiting because: it means I keep my ideas and thoughts to myself and don't contribute in conversations, and miss out on the benefits of a group effort. It also means I can feel inadequate, stupid and therefore withdraw from people around me. This can lead to me feeling alone.

How I would like it to be: I would love to feel more confident in who I am, and know that I have value to offer and give others in conversations and team environments. I would also like to know that I am a person that others value, listen to and respect.

My empowering thought statement would then become: I am a person of great worth and value and have a lot to give, contribute and share with others.

Changing a limiting thought can take some time. Your subconscious mind has held onto the thought for a while, which is why your mind holds onto it as a true belief, and it can take time re-program it. As every belief started with a thought, your new empowering belief has to start there too. So repeating your new thought each day is the next part of the journey. Write it down. Stick it on your fridge. Soon your unconscious mind will be searching for ways to live out of the new thought and not the old, and a new empowering belief is created.

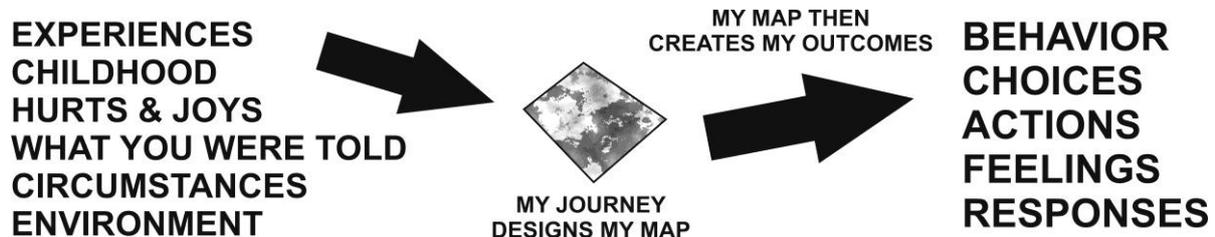
Sometimes the limiting thoughts can be very deeply attached and powerful, and getting someone to walk with you through the transformation is helpful.

thought seven: map thinking

Every second, your mind is being exposed to around **2 million bits of information.**

Imagine that you have map of Sydney. It is a good map and has been designed in detail, providing you will a pretty good idea of Sydney. But it's only a map, it's not actually Sydney. Imagine that the only way you could experience Sydney, was through your map, would it be accurate? It's the same in life because we all have our own internal map of how we see the world, or internal worldview, but it isn't always an accurate reflection of what the world is really like.

What this means is that we cannot experience the world the way it really is; we can only experience it based on our internal worldview ... your personal map. So no matter how accurate you think you're experiencing reality you can only experience **your** definition of reality. (see diagram below)



Your mind experiences and receives a lot of information, and in every second of time you're experiencing around 2 million bits of information. Every colour, smell, noise, feeling, light, word, body language, feeling and so on and so on is being shot at your subconscious mind every second. Mind blowing.

It is impossible for our minds to focus on all of these bits of information all of the time. If we did, our brain would melt down, and we wouldn't be able to talk, focus, think or walk. So our mind has a filtration system, connected to our map, because the average person can only take in about 130 bits of information every second. Our mind then deletes, distorts and generalises everything that it feels is irrelevant, useless and not aligned with your internal map and view of the world. The question to ask yourself is "*what am I leaving out*"?

What if your mind is deleting and distorting the very thing you personally need to create positive change? For example, if your app believes that life is hard, you're going to leave out any evidence that life is easy or fun. If your app believes that people can't be trusted, you're going to keep experiencing people who can't be trusted, and you're going to keep leaving out and not noticing everybody who can be trusted.

The other fascinating thing that our mind does is actively seek out evidence and proof that our internal worldview or map is true. Powerful thought. So if my internal map believes that I am stupid, my mind searches for evidence to prove it. If I say something wrong, or make a mistake or get criticised for something I did, my mind is like, "see, right there, you did it again, you are indeed stupid". This is why having awareness around your thoughts and beliefs

is so empowering. Imagine the personal empowerment when your mind starts searching for evidence and proof of how great you are.

We are leaving out a huge amount of information every second, and it could be great information. We've got to change the beliefs and thoughts that are limiting us, so we can filter in the good information. As I said earlier, we filter out information through deleting, distorting and generalising.

Eg. Jack's thought is that he is unlovable. What information does he delete? Love. If someone shows him love, he distorts it? *"They have an alternative motive, want something back."* Then the generalisations come flying in that *everyone is like that*.

Jack's map is that he is unlovable. But this is not the truth.

Eg. Lilly's thought is that she can't belong. What information does she delete ... acceptance. Someone tries to accept her, how might she distort? *"It's fake; it won't last, I will be hurt again."* Then the generalisation is, *this is how it always happens to me*.

Lilly's map is that she can't belong. But it's not the truth.

The thing is, even though our limiting thoughts and stronghold beliefs are not true, they have the same power over our lives as truth. Scary stuff.

Your map, which has been developed over your years of growing up, positive and negative experiences, lies, misunderstandings, dysfunctional relationships, hurt, betrayal, joy, triumphs, victories, successes etc. can be UPDATED and EXPANDED to become your most powerful and beautiful asset in your life journey.

Changing your thinking and shifting the information your map filters is a powerful pathway toward the freedom you want to experience in life. Expanding your map is a process, but I do believe you can create the change you need by applying the thoughts we have already discussed and learning a new language of self, which is the next thought.

thought eight: **self thinking**

Our **self talk** has incredible power over our behaviour, our decision making, our interaction with others, our self worth and our **outcomes in every area of our life**

One of the most powerful ways to create change in our life is self-talk. Self-talk are the things we say to ourselves, about ourselves and to ourselves every day. The average person engages in self-talk about 3,000 times a day, and most of that talk is about ourselves. Researchers have also discovered that about 80% of it is negative.

That means that the average person says approximately 2,400 negative things about themselves every day. **Can you begin to imagine the power these words have over our lives.**

Thousands upon thousands of little negative self-talks attacking our worth, value, identity and success happens every day. Things like “I will never get this right”, “I always fail”, “I will never be good enough, smart enough, fit enough, attractive enough or whatever enough”. “I can’t do this”, “they don’t like me”, “I shouldn’t have said that”, “I am an idiot”, “I don’t belong”, “bad things always happen to me” ... And so the list goes on a thousand times over every day.

These words of negative self-talk have incredible power over our behaviour, our decision making, our interaction with others, our self-worth and our outcomes in every area of our life. So what can we do? Well, as you read this next statement, your whole world is about to shift.

Listen and become aware of your self-talk and notice what it is you are saying to yourself.

What you have just done is create a new awareness around your internal language. You are all of a sudden going to become very aware of the things you say to yourself, and mostly the negative things. I encourage you to write them down ... Maybe not all 2,400 :-)) but notice the themes. Notice the use of words like never, always, can’t, I am or everyone.

Firstly, become aware of the language and then begin to challenge it. Argue back. Tell your little negative self-talk to politely leave you alone. Lastly, begin to reframe the thoughts, deliberately changing your internal language. This may seem a little forced or awkward at first, a bit like riding a bike, but soon you will be speaking a new language effortlessly. It will change your world.

Here are some reframe examples to get you started:

Change “I can’t” to “I won’t” ... This is a simple, but powerful way of taking ownership and moving yourself into taking responsibility for your life.

Change “what if” to “I wonder what it will be like when ... “. So instead of saying what if I fail, or what if I get rejected or what if it doesn’t work, reframe it by saying, I wonder what it will be like when ... Insert positive outcome. Focus on how you want it to be.

Listen to and change the negative generalizations like; always and never for example. I always fail. Reframe: “I haven’t always failed; in fact I have been successful numerous times. When I have failed, I have learnt great lessons, so let’s have another go and see what I can learn”. Develop a new perspective around failure like; there is no such thing as failure, only feedback to help me grow.

What we tell and think of ourselves has the power to create our reality. Language creates our culture of self. What are you telling yourself? Challenge your self-talk and re-frame it in a way that is resourceful to you. Question your thoughts – Ask yourself: “How true is this?”, “What evidence have I got to support this?”, “If a friend was saying this about themselves, what would I say to them?” “Who says that’s true, or where did I learn that?” “When did I decide I wasn’t good enough, and how is that belief helping me?” Learn to not believe the story that your mind is telling you.

One of my personal re-frames that has helped me a lot is this one:

“I did _____ (insert what I did or this happened to me) and therefore I am _____ (insert self talk like, I am not good enough). The shift is from the “I did” therefore “I am” to a new statement, “I did” therefore “I have learnt”. Simple but has been powerful for me because there are always positive learnings for me in every situation I walk through.

Example: *I forgot to meet a friend for coffee and therefore I am a crappy friend.* That thought can grow until it becomes limiting across my entire life. Reframe: *I made a mistake, and have now learnt that I need to be a more organised with my scheduling.*

Have a go at reframing these popular negative self-talk scenarios:

1. I can’t ever get this right
2. Nothing ever goes how I want it to
3. They never come through for me
4. This is a waste of time
5. I don’t know why I bother
6. This is impossible
7. This is too hard

thought nine: **freedom thinking**

Imagine not living under the **expectations of others** but being true to yourself and your dreams.

What I have discovered is that people generally do not look for greater freedom internally; they seek it through external circumstances or people. **Greater freedom is not created through the external but through our inner selves.**

What would it mean for you to experience greater freedom? I believe your outcome would be more content, more at peace, with less internal conflict, more self belief, stronger resolve, more resilient, greater self-love, less internal chaos, reduced anxiety, less fear and more action. I don't know anyone who would not love to see that shift in their lives.

Imagine not allowing the negative words spoken over your life to impact and influence how you live. Imagine not having to prove yourself to others, particularly your worth and value. Imagine not having to strive in life, to feel like you can only just survive. Imagine not constantly comparing yourself to others. Imagine being free from shame and guilt, free to love others without conditions and strings attached. Imagine being free from perfectionism, being overwhelmed, anxiety and low self-esteem, not being limited and held back by past mistakes. This is true freedom

So yes these steps are simple, but they do require a level of commitment to change. **Personal transformation doesn't happen accidentally; it happens on purpose.** We need to commit to the journey, invest time and energy into it and create space in our lives for deeper personal transformation. That's where greater freedom comes from, and when we discover greater freedom internally, our external world is transformed.

1/ LET GO

What do I need to let go of? It's a question I often ask myself because I need to be continually letting go of the things that are not helpful or resourceful to my life and journey. Letting go of past hurts offenses, mistakes and negative emotions. **Holding onto this stuff keeps you in the past, contaminates the present and limits the future.** It is not denying that stuff happened, or saying what happened was ok, but it is acknowledging what happened and then letting go of the negative emotions attached. Letting go is very freeing, but we tend to want to hold onto the negative emotions attached, which produces ongoing trauma, feelings of overwhelm, anxiety and grief. It simply is not helpful or resourceful for us to hold onto negative emotions, but we do it. Of course, letting go can be scary. Security, familiarity and identity can all be tied into some of the things we hold onto but in reality these hold us back. So it may not be easy, but it will be worth it. *"When we let go of a negative feeling, we are also freeing ourselves from all the associated negative thoughts"* (Letting go, by David Hawkins) How brilliant is that.

2/ LEARN FROM

What can I learn from this? This is another great question that will become resourceful to you and your journey. There is always something we can learn from every experience we walk through, good and bad. I am often encouraging clients to write down their three positive learnings from conflict, bad experience, criticism and suffering that can empower them in the

journey ahead. It is often very surprising for people to discover that there are positive learnings for them, and how helpful this can be in reframing their thinking. I am now constantly asking myself that question, “what can I learn from this that will help me grow”. When you can make this shift in your thinking, it will help free you from constantly feeling like you have to prove yourself, because you will be searching for the learnings and not the limitations.

3/ LOOK AHEAD

Finally another question to consider, “how do you want it to be?” We can create greater internal freedom by focusing on and then working towards how we want it to be, the preferred future. We have to know what that is though. Giving yourself some time to dream and vision what you really want your world to be like, and then write it down (be as specific as you can). **Of course, you can do this with your external world, setting specific goals for career, family, health, finances, etc. is brilliant, but greater freedom starts and develops internally.** So what do you want your internal world to be like, and begin to focus on that. Remember, what you focus on is what you get to the exclusion of everything else. Our culture tends to focus on the negative, the lack, the problem, the hurt, etc. and therefore we continue to get more of that. The solution, the gain, the healing and the freedom are there too, so why not focus on what we want it to be like, and begin to get more of that.

I personally believe we all need to “get over ourselves” in varying degrees, some more than others. To walk in and experience greater freedom, I had to get over myself. I needed to loosen up a little and not take myself so seriously. Choosing gratitude is a great starting point, and laugh a little at yourself. Getting over ourselves is such a great gift and will lead you to greater internal freedom. Here are a couple of thoughts:

1. **You think everyone is thinking and talking about you.** This is actually not happening. Most people are just like you and only thinking about themselves, and maybe that everyone else is thinking or talking about them. Ask yourself different questions like, “how can I add some value to others here?”
2. **You take everything as a personal attack.** I was a little like this, Mr Defensive, who always took feedback and criticism as a personal attack. I developed a much healthier approach in getting over myself ... “it’s not about me”, and started asking myself “what can I learn from this to help me grow”.
3. **You are very easily offended.** This was a bit of me too and connects with the above. When we are self-absorbed we write stories about other people’s behaviours or comments that aren’t true. We see something, hear something or experience something and without all the facts, truth and insights needed to really know the real story, we get offended. So instead of allowing the real story to influence us, we make one up, which we convince ourselves is true. The thing is, even if it is completely untrue but we believe it as truth, it has the same power over us as if it were totally true. Then you get your outcomes based entirely on a made up story.
4. **You always need to be right.** You have to have the last say. You always have a better and bigger story than everyone else. Your idea is always the best. Seriously, get over yourself ... for your sake and everyone else’s. This is the significance taker, where worth comes from feeling respected and important. The need to be considered unique and special and for people to look up to you and even fear you to a certain extent. The need for validation and recognition feed your ego, and life becomes all about you.

There are two main types of people that come to mind in this little scenario, the loud and the lowly. **The loud are the obvious**, and in the extreme they can be the aggressive, the attention seekers, the noisy, the obnoxious, significance takers and the always opinionated. **The lowly are the unnoticed**, and in the extreme can be quiet, passive aggressive, attention diverters, victim thinkers and withdrawn. We have all met these types, and quite possibly have some of those tendencies ourselves.

Interestingly both are driven by self-absorption. Self-love, worth and value, are very different from self-absorption and self-preoccupation. **The loud is driven primarily by pride**, and the **lowly primarily by fear** and both are un-resourceful and unhelpful behaviours. A healthy balance would be a person who considers, respects and adds value to other people, whilst at the same time not compromising who they are as a person. They don't hide, wear a mask or push their way around.

Follow the pattern above: Let go, Learn from and Look ahead.

1. Write down three things, feelings or situations that you need to let go of.
2. Write down what you can learn from them that will empower and grow you as you let them go.
3. Now give yourself some time to dream and vision about what you really want your world to be like, and then write it down (*be as specific as you can*).

thought ten: **fear thinking**

“Most **fear of life** is really the fear of emotions. It is not the facts that we fear **but our feelings about them.**”

David Hawkins

We love our comfort zones. We protect them, fight for them and build walls around them. They give us that sense of safety, security and of course comfort. **But what if our comfort zones were limiting us from experiencing the life we actually want.** The life we dream about, imagine and hope for. Don't you want that life? A life where you are being you and flourishing as you and loving it? A life where you are not just dreaming about how it could be but actually doing it ... Living it.

Do you ever find yourself saying, “I wish I could do that” or “I want that for me” or “if only I could be like that” or Fill in the blanks. We often look around at others who are doing it, living it, creating it, designing it, fulfilling it and loving it, and want what they have. The thing is, where they are, and where we truly want to be, is outside our comfort zone. **So we find ourselves in the cycle of dream and regret.** Dreaming of what we would love to be, do, feel, experience and have ... then regretting we didn't do anything about it.

If we constantly move away from the perceived pain of expanding our comfort zone, we will continually produce inconsistent results.

What's outside our little comfy zone is of course FEAR. Fear of the unknown, of failure, getting it wrong, messing it up, not being enough and even the fear of being successful. What if we moved the fear from outside our comfort zone to inside and turned it up really loud. What if the fear of not trying, of not having a go, of not taking action, of regret, of lost opportunity and of staying where we are became bigger, greater and more motivating? What if we saw our comfort zone as our pain zone, because not following our heart, dreams and passions is more painful than anything else. What if the pain of staying the same is bigger than the pain of change? Ultimately, won't that pain be greater?

Some questions to ask yourself if you really want that life out there.

1/ What are you missing out on by continuing to stay in your comfort zone?

2/ What will be the consequences if you don't make a change?

3/ What is it that you are choosing to put up with by not stepping out?

4/ If you could step out, how would it be? What would it be like?

What I have recently discovered is that we can sometimes jump out of our comfort zone, but this isn't sustainable and soon we jump back in. **The challenge then is not so much getting out of our comfort zone but expanding our comfort zone, to embrace the uncomfortable.**

There are three universal fears that we all face: The fear of not being good enough, the fear of not being loved and the fear of not belonging. Fear is something we all live with, but the reality is that most fear is simply our imagination. Fear is self-created by imagining a negative outcome or negative feeling in the future. I am not talking about feeling fear when you see a shark swim by, I am talking about the most common fear we face, the "what if" imagination fear.

Fantasised Experiences Appearing Real

So often, we create fear around things that don't exist, by consuming our thoughts with negative "what if" statements. What if they don't like me, what if they reject me, what if I fail, what if I look silly, what if I don't get the job, what if I don't get picked, what if it doesn't work out etc. Here is a little exercise about how our imagination creates fear. **The creating fear exercise:** (adapted from Jack Canfield's book, The Success Principles)

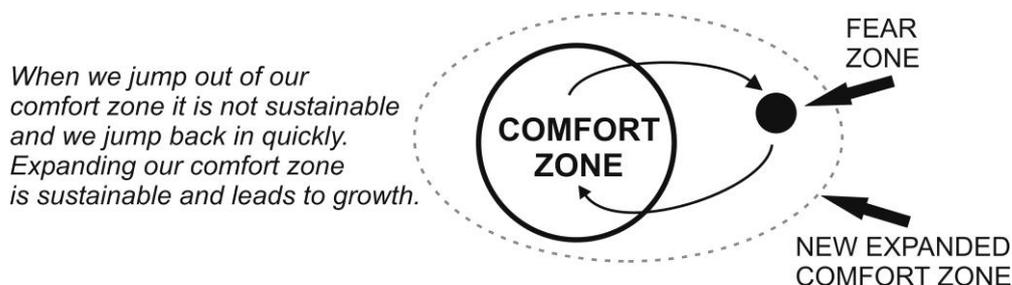
Example: *I want to ask Sally out for a date, and I create fear by imagining that she will say no and I will feel embarrassed and rejected.*

Try one for yourself:

I want to _____, and I create fear by imagining

_____.

"My life has been filled with terrible misfortunes, most of which have never happened."
(Mark Twain)



Expanding your comfort zone:

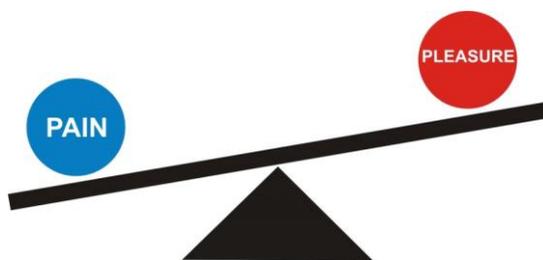
Some of the greatest thinkers throughout history taught that avoiding pain is a more powerful motivator than the desire for obtaining pleasure. ***"The aim of the wise is not to secure***

pleasure, but to avoid pain.” – Aristotle. We make decisions and adopt behaviours that move us away from possible pain, (we avoid pain at all costs), instead of what might move us toward probable pleasure or success.

For example, I was procrastinating calling somebody close to me because there had been a breakdown in our relationship. I kept putting it off. My coach asked me what my motivation was for putting it off and eventually I realised that it was fear. Fear is a massive motivator in our lives. The fear of pain. Rejection. Failure. Success. Intimacy. Looking silly. (the list is endless) Remember, most fears come from the three universal fears that we all face in life; the fear of not belonging, the fear of not being loved and the fear of not being good enough. These fears can stop us in our tracks from experiencing the life we really want to live.

Back to my story. For me the fear of possible rejection or the pain of the relationship getting worse, was stopping me from making the call. The possible pain outweighed the probable pleasure of the relationship being reconciled and restored. My coach then helped me to see that the probable pleasure of taking a risk, making the call and demonstrating love and forgiveness, was far larger than the pain of not taking action. The regret I might feel or the pain of losing a relationship that I treasured, etc. So as I changed the way I thought, my motivation changed.

It is important to remember that we are instinctively motivated by *the need to avoid pain*. **So, imagine and feel the pain you would experience by not taking action. Imagining the pain you would feel is your greatest motivator to take action. Raise the pain of inaction.** Then, as an added measure, imagine and feel the pleasure you would experience by taking the action and being successful. By increasing the pain around the inaction, I expanded my comfort zone, took action, and the result was brilliant.



What area of your life, or decision do you need to change the weight and impact of pain versus pleasure? Then write down how you will do this, and then begin to take the action required. I have heard it said that the best way to overcome fear, imagined fear, is to do the thing you fear.

Eg. You have been asked to present a talk on a subject you are passionate about to a group of fellow students. You declined the invitation because you are fearful; scared of getting it wrong, not doing a great job and being humiliated, etc. Deep down you would love to be able to do it, but your fear is too great.

FEAR: speaking in public

PAIN: moving away from: possibly getting it wrong, not being very good, humiliation.

DECISION: stay in your comfort zone

- Increase PAIN of inaction: missed opportunity and regret of not taking a risk; miss out on development and growth and learning; the feeling of being led by fear and so on.

- Increase PLEASURE of action: proud of self, stepping stone towards the future, expanding comfort zone, the pleasure of affirmation, success and achievement.

DECISION: have a go and learn and grow.

Brett White

Brett White is the founder **Be Leadership** and **the Shift Movement**, which are both dedicated to creating transformation and freedom in people's lives. He is an author, speaker, life coach and pastor with over 20 years experience in leadership, communication, transformational thinking, mindsets and behavioural change. He has run workshops, seminars and sessions throughout Australia, and in Singapore and Cambodia. He is married to Jenni with 2 children, Isabella and Max, and lives in Southern Sydney where he enjoys the surf, his football (soccer) and his music.



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