

Some Easy Steps for Feeling Better Now – November 2010

How do you feel in the work you do? In the life you live? Are you happy with the choices you have made? Does your work bring you fulfillment? Is there meaning in your day? Our society is so “action-focused” that sometimes we forget to slow down. We forget to check in with ourselves and ask important questions. Many times we take action first only to think about what we have done later. For instance, in the morning we may rush around frantically trying to avoid being late for work, for school, for anything. Have you heard yourself think and say, “hurry I don’t want to be late!” or “quick, we only have five minutes more and then we have to leave...” This rushing, action-packed beginning of our day can set off a string of unwanted experiences. Not only can we end up late, exactly what we didn’t want, but instead of feeling refreshed for a brand new day, we create feelings of panic, frustration and anxiety. We can change this and create more of what we want in our lives. So how do we make the most of our day, and feel better in our work and our lives?

Awareness is the first step and if you are reading this now – great news - you have begun the process of change. Being aware of our thoughts and how they make us feel is an important first step. Before we can positively shift our mindset, our thoughts and beliefs, and feel better, we have to check in with ourselves and know how we are feeling in the moment. We think, think, think and go, go, go. Pausing to acknowledge how we are feeling in what we are doing is essential for change.

Acceptance is the next step. Knowing that it is okay to feel how we feel allows us a sense of relief. Feelings of relief, equivalent to air being let out of a balloon or weight being lifted from our shoulders, immediately feels better. Feelings of disempowerment such as fear, sadness and anxiety and feelings of empowerment such as optimism, happiness and love are all human emotions and are normal to feel at times in our lives. Taking deep breaths in silence and saying to ourselves that it is okay to feel how we feel is freeing. It allows for acceptance.

Shifting our thinking comes next. The third step has to do with a conscious choice to change our thoughts in the moment. We have a stream of self-talk that is constant in our heads. Is this internal dialogue helping us (making us feel good), or hindering us (making us feel bad)? What do we say throughout our day? Once we determine how we are feeling it is easier to know whether our thoughts are helping or hindering us.

There have been many books written about the power of positive thinking. The movie, *The Secret*, introduced many people to the power of their thoughts and feelings. It was a “wake-up call” for many that we create our lives through our minds, our thinking. It can

be empowering and downright scary to think about. The Law of Attraction is a topic I will write about more in December.

So let's get back to the basics. Changing our thoughts takes practice. We are used to being on "automatic" pilot with our thinking and often we have never known that we can control what we think. In other words, we don't have to react to things, we can create new ways of thinking that feel s better and create good things in our lives. One way of doing this is to be aware of our words. Our thoughts come out in the words we use, in our dialogue and conversations with others. Listen to what you are saying. Are you complaining or praising? Are you acknowledging what is working or what isn't? Shifting your focus and your words from negative to positive always feel s good. Challenge yourself to do this every day and pay attention to how much better you feel.

Being easy about all of this is step four. Often we beat ourselves up when we think negatively especially when we recognize that we want to change. Being gentle with ourselves and acknowledging that we are in a process of change and that it takes some practice gives us a well-deserved break.

Awareness, acceptance, shifting thoughts and being easy with ourselves are steps to feel better moment to moment. Remember that you are allowed to feel what you are feeling and that it is natural for you to do so. Know that from the low feelings come the high. It is only through feeling sadness that we know what happiness is. Be good to yourself and pat yourself on the back. You've begun an empowering, life-changing process!