

"Who Switched off My Brain?"

Monday, April 28, 2014

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Book by Dr. Caroline Leaf, 2 decades of brain research

1. Introduction

- a. Have you ever felt discouraged, unfocused or overwhelmed? Are there unhealthy patterns in your life, or your family that you just can't break?
- b. We know scientifically how our thoughts affect our emotions and our bodies. We also now know that our toxic thoughts and emotions can be swept away, and your brain can be "switched on."
- c. Thoughts, toxic and non-toxic, are measurable and occupy mental "real estate." Thoughts are active...they grow and change. They influence every decision, word, action and physical reaction.
- d. There are 12 areas of toxic thoughts which can be poison to our minds and our bodies. She calls them the Dirty Dozen. Research today shows that up to 80% of physical, emotional, and mental health issues today could be a direct result of our thought lives.
- e. The brain can really change...she developed a "Brain Sweep" It is a series of sequential questions that will take your brain through a detoxing process.

2. Toxic Thoughts

- a. Every thought whether positive or negative goes through the same cycle when it forms.
- b. Your attitude is all of your thoughts put together and reflects your state of mind.
- c. Attitudes cause secretion of chemicals, which create physical reality in your body and mind creating an emotion.
The combination of all three impacts your body in a positive or negative manner. And we can actually feel our thoughts through our emotions.

- d. Every memory you make (based on your thoughts) has an emotion associated with it. Example: Focus on an upsetting time in your life. Notice: what emotions pop up.
- e. Every thought should be weighed carefully for "as a man thinketh, so is he."

3. Stress

- a. Stress is the result of toxic thinking, and the Dirty Dozen all thrive on it. This stress puts a severe strain on your body's system, including the brain.
- b. Toxic emotions create real physiological reactions in the body and cause serious mental and physical illness.
- c. Stress causes the wrong kind of chemicals in the wrong proportions to be released. Impacts the immune system, digestive, the heart, etc. In the book she reviews all the research on the corresponding conditions caused by stress.
- d. The Toxic Pathway: three stages of stress:
 - 1) First stage is temporary stress...sweaty palms fast heart beat.
 - 2) Second stage is stress is prolonged so starts becoming harmful to the system.
 - 3) Third stage is chronic stress. Your systems reach exhaustion from the constant state of heightened alert.
- e. We must confront our repressed unforgiveness, anger, rage, hatred or any other form of toxic thinking. We all have a "medical need" to forgive ourselves and forgive others.
- f. To detoxify our thought life, we must take a toxic thought back through the sequence to re-build it, or even better learn how not to build it in the first place.
She formulated a process simplifying it: **5 Stages...**gather, reflect, journal, revisit and reach.
This is the Brain Sequence to help people think and learn for lasting success. The "Brain Sweep" questions trigger this process, sweeping away each area of toxic thinking, the "Dirty Dozen."

4. The Science of Thought: The 5 Stages

- a. Gather:
1st step: we gather information...our electrical impulses from our five senses. 2nd we pass this info and decide whether it is temporary or permanent and it is at this level we can just dismiss it so it does not stay at all. "I choose not to think about this issue anymore." If we fail to do this, the information will stay and be stored.
- b. Reflect: If you are going to get out of any toxic thinking jam, you need to think, understand and apply the wisdom you gain. ***Becoming more aware***

of any negative beliefs should be your goal in the process. The science of thought demands that change must occur: either we reinforce the thought or we change it. When we think deeply to understand, we go beyond storing facts and start coming up with answers. "Research shows that around 7 deep thinking exercises for 10 minutes per day over a period of 21 days help create long-lasting change."

c. Journal: Writing down your thoughts is important because the process consolidates the memory and adds clarity to what you have been thinking about.

You see your conscious and non-conscious thoughts on a piece of paper. Journaling should not be limited to linear but involve pictures, and color and texture as that is how your brain works. This allows you to see from both sides of brain...left side starts with details to build the big picture, and the right side takes the big picture and breaks down into details.

d. Revisit: Revisiting what you have journaled is a revealing process. When you bring the thoughts into the conscious again, they enter a labile state...meaning they can be altered. They can be tossed, redesigned or reinforced. This is a major step in detoxifying thoughts. At the end of every Dirty Dozen segments in the book are Brain Sweep questions you ask in sequence, giving you power to change and rewire the thoughts.

We can not control our circumstances but we can control our reactions to those circumstances.

e. Reach: This is the stage where you reach out beyond toxic thinking by applying the principle "faith without works is dead."

For example: you really forgive that person who treated you badly, believe you will be healed, believe your children will be fine, believe God is your provider, lose that unwanted weight, release your mind from dwelling in the past, refuse to continue talking negatively about a certain situation, ...you reach beyond where you are.

"Finally, we need to understand a really fascinating concept about the power of thought; when we think and use our free will to make a decision, we influence which genes are initiated (expressed) in our nerve cells. This is called epigenetics (emphasizes that our perceptions of life shape our biology and not the other way around) and quite brilliantly shows us the power of our thought life, upholding the scripture: 'For as he thinks in his heart, so is he' (Proverbs 23:7)"

5. The Dirty Dozen

- a. Toxic Thoughts
- b. Toxic Emotions

- c. Toxic Words
- d. Toxic Choices
- e. Toxic Dreams
- f. Toxic Seeds
- g. Toxic Faith
- h. Toxic Love
- i. Toxic Touch
- j. Toxic Seriousness
- k. Toxic Health
- l. Toxic Schedules

Remember you are not chained to your past, you can choose to step away from your limiting thoughts and beliefs and step forward into your future.

