

The Zero Excuses Challenge

Day 5 - Mindset

What We Need to Know About Our Thoughts

1. How our thoughts are formed

You can look at your thoughts from two different perspectives. Both are valid and connected to each other. As a Christian woman, I believe that spiritually your thoughts are a manifestation of your heart, your emotions, your experiences, and your faith system. All of these parts of who I am are the foundation of my thought life.

If you're more inclined to a scientific perspective, then I've got you covered. Dr. Antonio Damasio conducted research that showed thoughts are formed as a result of how the brain interprets emotions, which are themselves purely physical signals of the body reacting to external stimuli. So your emotions dictate your thoughts and are manifested in your body and your actions accordingly.

2. How our thoughts become our reality

When we speak, we give others an indication of who we are, what we think, and how we feel about ourselves and the world around us. To really get to know someone, you must see them operate in the midst of pain, struggle, adversity, loss, or even great triumph. What's truly inside of you comes out when we're hit with extreme emotions.

The more you meditate on negativity the more it will manifest in your life. One powerful quote that I repeat to myself is "the power of life and death are in the tongue". How I speak about myself and my situation will become reality. I must determine what I want that reality to be and begin to speak it into existence.

3. How to be intentional

Let's define intentional so we can understand what it really means. It means "to be deliberate, resolute, and firm, to fix your mind on something and to follow through." We must follow through if we truly want to detox our mindset and shift into growth.

You hear it all the time from most successful people that their success is due in large part to their ability to be intentional about what they want, how they pursue it, how they value it, and what they are willing to sacrifice to obtain it, whatever "it" (the desired goal) is.

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Your power rests in your ability to focus your thoughts and to shift them where you want them to go. To do this, you must develop a strategy to create a habit.

Strategy #1

Create a gratitude journal or jar. Take time each day to meditate and write about what you're most grateful for that day. Try to do this at the same time each day to create a routine/habit. The best part is that you can go back and read them later when you need a boost.

Strategy #2

Include an act of kindness in your life each day. For example: Try to take note when people do a good job and give recognition when it's due at work. Write a card to someone you haven't seen in a while and tell them something nice. Volunteer for organizations that help others. Tell someone you love them and how much you appreciate them.

Strategy #3

Post quotes and images that remind you to be grateful around your house. Share gratitude each day by posting a tweet, Facebook post or Pinterest. Watch inspiring videos that will remind you of the good in the world.

Strategy #4

Spend quality time with the people you love – your spouse, your kids, your family, and your friends. Call your parents or grandparents, if they live in another state. Stay connected to the people that matter in your life.

Strategy #5

When you think a negative thought, try to see the positive side in the situation. Commit to one day a week when you won't complain about anything. The less you complain the easier it will be to see the good side and often find the solution you need to the situation.

Embrace challenges and turn them into opportunities to grow. See the growth opportunity in your mistakes. Be thankful when you learn something new. Growth requires being uncomfortable. Learn to embrace the feeling and be grateful for it.