

Present Moment Awareness: Part 3

"Are You Using Your Mind, or is Your Mind Using You"

By Gayle North

"Just as dogs love to chew bones, the mind loves to get its teeth into problems... have you found the "off" button? Not to be able to stop thinking is a dreadful affliction, but we don't realize it because almost everybody is suffering from it, so we consider it normal."

- Eckhart Tolle, Author of "The Power of Now"

If we get stuck in thoughts about problems that lead us around in circles back to the place we started, has thinking become a disease in itself? Eckhart Tolle reminds us that the mind is a superb instrument if used properly. Used wrongly, however, it becomes destructive. Or, as he puts it; "It is not so much that you use it wrongly – it is that you usually don't use it at all. It uses you. That is the disease"

When the mind is using us, it creates a parade of labels, images, phrases, judgments, and definitions about situations and about others that blocks all true relationships and true healing. It slows our individual progress.

When our mind is using us, we become a slave to it. Eckhart says that it is almost as if we were possessed without knowing it and we begin to think that our mind is us – when actually it is the possessing entity. The beginning of freedom is to realize that we are not the thinker – the possessing entity. Knowing this enables a person to begin *watching the thinker*.

FREEING YOURSELF FROM YOUR MIND

What do you mean by "watching the thinker?"

Eckhart explains it this way: "You have probably come across "mad" people in the street incessantly talking or muttering to themselves. Well, that's not much different from what you and all other "normal" people do, except that you don't do it out loud. The voice comments, speculates, judges, compares, complains, likes, dislikes, and so on. The voice isn't necessarily relevant to the situation you find yourself in at the time; it may be retrieving the recent or distant past or rehearsing or imagining possible future situations. Here it often imagines things going wrong and negative outcomes; this is called worry. Sometimes this soundtrack is accompanied by visual images or "mental movies."

Even if the voice is relevant to the situation at hand, it will interpret it in terms of the past. This is because the voice belongs to your conditioned mind, which is the result of all your past history as well as of the collective cultural mind-set you inherited.

The good news is that you *can* free yourself from your mind. This is the only true liberation. You can take the first step right now. Start listening to the voice in your head as often as you can. Pay particular attention to any repetitive thought patterns, those old gramophone records that have been playing in your head perhaps for many years. This is what I mean by "watching the thinker", which is another way of saying: listen to the voice in your head, *be* there as the witnessing presence.

When you listen to that voice, listen to it impartially. That is to say, do not judge. Do not judge or condemn what you hear, for doing so would mean that the same voice has come in again through the back

door. You will soon realize: *there* is the voice, and here I am listening to it, watching it. This *I am* realization, this sense of your own presence, is not a thought. It arises from beyond the mind. Quoted directly from Eckhart Tolle and his book "*The Power of Now*".

Gayle North offers Personal Coaching for Positive Change using recently developed empowerment technologies to clear mental and emotional blocks that keep people stuck in unhealthy habits and prevent them from performing at their highest potential in school, sports, relationships, work and finance. Call 406-837-1214 to learn how you can STOP SMOKING IN ONE HOUR and for coaching in person or by phone. changeiseasy@montanasky.net www.PositiveChangeInstitute.com