



Wellbeing Insights

We become what we think about

I came across this statement recently, and it gave me food for thought.

The thoughts that run through our minds are not within our control. They will come whether we want them to or not. However, the thoughts that we energise, that we attach to and think about continuously, they are the ones that make us who we are.

What a powerful insight!

Too often – what Buddhist traditions might call my ‘monkey mind’ – is in the driving seat! The fears and thoughts that come into my mind and induce visceral responses in my body, are allowed to become my reality. My body responds to my thoughts, as it cannot distinguish between what is real objectively and what is a construct of my thoughts. Who allows my thoughts to be my reality? I do. It is too easy to say to myself, “I couldn’t help it?” Really?

Luckily, as well as a ‘monkey mind’, I also have a more evolved pre-frontal cortex – a sophisticated instrument that allows me to curate my story. I could use this part of my brain to consciously access my Character Strengths*, to see what to use to assist me. Fortunately, I have Perspective as a signature character strength. This strength enables me to use my critical reasoning to weigh up what thoughts and actions are appropriate in any given moment. I know I must integrate myself and challenge the thoughts that do not serve me. It is a truism I need to acknowledge: If you think in negative terms, you will get negative results; if you think in positive terms, you will get positive results.

Here within lies an opportunity. Why not watch the thoughts going through my mind and intentionally choose the ones I wish to take up and energise? In fact, can I take it back one step further? If I start out my day intentionally, choosing the attitude I wish to adopt for the day, setting myself up positively in the way I know works for me, am I now in a position to steer my day and govern my thoughts actively?

This type of intentionality, retaining my agency and not allowing myself to fall victim to my hard wiring that in evolutionary terms dates back to the cave, is a way to ensure I remain firmly in charge.

If we indeed do become what we think about, what messages am I giving myself? We all have the responsibility to know who we are now, to do the work that we were exhorted to do by the oracle on the walls of the Temple of Apollo, “Know Thyself”. Only in knowing who we are now, and focusing on living the highest version of ourselves, will we have the opportunity of shaping who we become.

I see this as an exciting opportunity.

*I know my Character Strengths having completed the [VIA Survey](#).