

Personal Q & A

Let's start at the beginning, otherwise known as chunking way down.

My Daily Thoughts:

What am I thinking about right now?

What was I thinking about on the way to work this morning?

While I was working, I found myself drifting off, and I started to think about:

After I spoke on the phone with my spouse, child, friend, boss, or client, I thought:

On my way home from work, I thought about:

Watching the news on TV, I was thinking about:

As I got into bed, put my head on the pillow, and wrapped the blanket snugly around me, I fell asleep thinking about:

Please add any questions that come to mind, or delete those that don't feel appropriate for you to answer at this time. If you were to write down your daily thoughts for only seven days, you might be surprised at how many of your thoughts are the same, day in and day out. It's also useful to remember that you weren't born with these thoughts but, at the same time, they are very familiar, like a pathway you have walked over and over. Following the same pathway is fine when it leads you to where you want to go. As you begin to set more desirable outcomes, new pathways will be needed to help bring them into reality.

Your Model of the World:

Make a list of the people, places or events that have influenced your model of the world. For example:

Mom, Dad, siblings, teachers, coaches, babysitters, friends, celebrities, writers, scientists, sports heroes, the daily news, work, co-workers, TV, movies, books . . .

Next write down how you were influenced by these people, places, or events. Feel free to add a new category or delete one that's listed.

Mom:

Dad:

Siblings:

Teachers:

Coaches:

Babysitters:

Friends:

Celebrities:

Writers:

Scientists:

Sports heroes:

The daily news:

Work:

Co-workers:

Movies:

Books:

Anything else that has influenced you:

An interesting picture of your model of the world may start to become apparent. You have started the process of recognizing your own mental map, or a representation of the people and situations in your life that form a reductionism or a map of *your* territory. This will make any adjustment you wish to incorporate so much easier, and there's nothing wrong with updating a map, especially when the world it represents changes anyway.

Perceptual Filters:

What are some of your filters? Please list the filters in your own life under each of the headings. Please remember, you are answering these questions for the purpose of understanding *self* better and becoming even more consciously aware of your “buttons.” Being more aware of your buttons allows you to more easily make changes, if you so desire.

Socioeconomic:

Are you in the middle, lower-middle, poor, upper-middle, rich, or wealthy class?

What influence does this have on your thinking processes, your self-esteem, and your self-confidence?

Gender:

If you're a female, do you feel understood (generally) when speaking to a man?

Likewise, if you're a man, do you feel understood (generally) when speaking to a woman?

Does either one of you sometimes think the other is speaking a foreign language?

If so, would you like to be understood?

Geographical:

Where do you live and how does the geography affect you? For example, if you live where there is abundant sunshine all year, you may spend a lot of time doing outdoor activities. If you have a lot of snow, you may spend more time indoors but also ski. If your area is rainy, you may own many umbrellas and, occasionally, feel a little down from the grey skies.

Skin colour:

Do you think or feel that people sometimes treat you a certain way because of your skin colour?

What decisions, if any, do you make about someone else, strictly based on the colour of their skin?

How does this affect your daily life, such as relationships, perceptions of self in relation to others, and so on?

Cultural:

Do you and/or your family come from a distinct ethnic or geographical culture?

Have you noticed that, when speaking to a person from another ethnic or geographical background, some of your decision-making processes, be they benign or otherwise, are influenced by cultural differences?

How does this affect your daily life, with regard to relationships, perceptions of self in relation to others, and so on?

Educational:

What level of education do you have?

Do you compare yourself to others because of it and, if so, when, where, and how?

Religious:

Do you have religious beliefs? If so, how does this influence your daily life?

Do you only associate with people of the same faith?

Does meeting someone with different religious beliefs influence your attitude and behaviour? If so, how?

Do you secretly wish other people would conform to your religious beliefs?

How do you feel if others try to convert you to their beliefs?

Political:

Do you have political beliefs? If so, how does this influence your daily life?

Do you only associate with people of the same political beliefs?

Does meeting someone with different political beliefs influence your attitude and behaviour? If so, how?

Do you secretly wish other people would conform to your political beliefs?

How do you feel if others try to convert you to their beliefs?

Ethics and Morality:

Do you mention ethics in conversation? If so, what for? What is your outcome? Do you simply pay lip service on occasion, or try to live ethically?

What situation could you find yourself in where ethics aren't a priority?

What goal or outcome do you wish to achieve that is worth overriding other goals or outcomes?

What does this compromise do regarding your attitude and behaviour?

How does following a code of ethics, or compromising it, affect your thinking?

Beliefs:

Do you have some beliefs that guide you through your life? Now, you may not be consciously aware of all your beliefs so, for our purposes here, just try to list the ones of which you are aware. They can be good, strong, positive beliefs—such as: The world is round, so I won't fall off when I go travelling. Or they can be less than positive—such as: I'm never going to lose weight, get that promotion, or be successful. You may want to make two lists: One list is for limiting beliefs, and the other is for positive, life-affirming beliefs.

Beliefs that guide me through my life—

Good, strong, positive ones:

Less than positive, or limiting, beliefs:

You are now, I hope, in a resourceful state, and you're familiar with being associated and dissociated. You've answered the questions about your daily thoughts and made notes about other influences in your life, such as how you built your model of the world through the uniqueness of your perceptual filters and beliefs.

There's one last set of questions to help get you thinking in a direction that's useful for making changes. Keeping your goals and outcomes in mind while reading through the "Tools of Transformation" chapter will help you to make them a reality.

Goals:

The first set of questions is slanted towards the areas in your life that may be causing you some discomfort, or concern.

Are there any areas of your life you would like to change? If so, what are they?

Would you like to react differently in a certain situation or situations?

Are there any behaviours you would like to change?

When and where do these behaviours occur that you would like to change?

Would you like to change your thoughts or your thinking about a certain subject, or subjects, perhaps in some specific context, or generally?

The following questions are based on the premise that life's pretty good, but there is also the possibility that it could be even better.

Are there any areas of your life in which you would like to improve, or increase, your happiness quotient? If so, what are they?

Is there something you do well (play golf or a musical instrument, write, dance, participate in sports, and so on) that you would like to do even better?

Would you like to feel more peaceful and content? If so, what could you do to be more peaceful and contented?

Are there any relationships in your life that could use a dose of improvement? If so, with whom, and how could they be improved?

Is there anything you would like to improve in your professional/working life? If so, what would you need to do to improve the situation?

If you would like to improve your economic situation, what are some things you could be doing to improve it?

How is your health and physical fitness? Are there any areas that could do with some attention? If so, what are they, and what can you do about them?

Take a moment or two to write down some of the *goals you would like to attain*.

Please try to be as specific as possible in relation to stating the goal and what you would achieve by reaching the goal. Doing so will enable you to have some goals and outcomes in mind when you begin the process of making changes.

Goals I would like to attain:

Now that you have listed some of the goals you would like to attain, ask yourself, “*What would I achieve if I got my goals?*” To help you answer that question, you may want to ask yourself a few clarifying questions, such as:

- What aspects of my life would be affected, and in what way, if and when I achieve my goals?
- How would my attitude towards my life, and to other people, be altered or affected once I reach my goals?
- What aspects (if any) of my personality would change once I achieve my goals?
- If aspects of my personality were to change, how would these changes impact my family, my friends, and acquaintances?
- In terms of outcomes, which outcomes would I satisfy from fulfilling my goals?

On the other hand, what would be the downside if you were to achieve your goals? All you have to do, by the way, is to reconsider the above questions with a negative bias; that is, allow yourself to become cynical or negative in some way, and then reread the questions. See where they lead you, and if you decide to change those insights (if any), remember that you have, within the pages of this book, some tools to enable you to do so.

Take a moment or two to write down some of the *outcomes you would like to attain*.

Now that you understand more about the value of setting goals and outcomes, and you have answered the questions, you're ready to read on and find out *how* to get what you want and have the best life possible. The value in learning and integrating these techniques into your life is twofold:

- You can use them to clean up the past.
- You can use them to enhance your success with regard to future outcomes.

All of this adds up to an increased happiness quotient.

And, just before we delve into the techniques, I'd like to mention one other four-toed dragon that can rear its ugly head when it comes to "Let's make some changes" time—and that is *resistance*.

More often than not, resistance to change is perceived as a negative, and anyone expressing same is so labelled as well. Quite often, as a matter of fact, resistance can be the result of two separate bodies of learned information now in conflict. In my experience, I have come across the phenomenon all too often to simply dismiss it out of hand, and I therefore set out to find a solution. For this reason, a technique designed to deal with resistance is included in the "Tools of Transformation" chapter.

I would suggest that, when you start with the techniques, do an internal check; and if you find any resistance to continuing with them, meander through the chapter to the technique called Parts Party, before throwing this book on the "Do later" pile.

Meanwhile, coming back to now—that is, this part of the book—you might be saying: "Give me *one* reason, just one, why learning this stuff will benefit me?"

One simple answer is: You will have increased happiness, self-confidence, joy, and an expanded comfort zone. A more specific answer might be: You may have a more fulfilling relationship with your spouse, you may now feel ready to apply for a promotion at work,

you may increase your financial prospects, and your health may improve. All these sound like pretty good things, do they not?

I trust it will be a fun-filled journey as you meander through the next chapter and discover the *tools of transformation*.