

Think Yourself Well

7 Steps To Mastering A Healthy Mind

Just like we need to feed our bodies with healthy foods, we need to feed our minds with healthy thoughts. If you're new to this, it will take a while to get the hang of, so be really patient with yourself as you learn. Here are a few ideas to start off with.

1/ Come up with a positive 'anchor' image or phrase. Our thoughts create our emotions, so when you think a yukky thought it will make you feel depressed or anxious. This happens to all of us from time to time, but when it does, have an image or phrase ready to replace it straight away. People often choose to remember a favourite place, or a phrase like "all is well" to distract themselves from unpleasant thoughts.

2/ Relax. We all need downtime, and it gives our brains the chance to file any new information in the right place. Even if you can just manage a few minutes of peace and quiet day and completely switch off, it will really help.

3/ Try mirror work. Louise Hay's book 'You Can Heal Your Life' is perfect for learning how to do this, and it really does transform your thinking.

4/ Make a vision board. These are a fun way to get you focussed on what you're aiming for, and great for re-motivating yourself on a bad day. Collect images of things you'd like and places you want to go, and create a collage. Put it up somewhere you'll see it every day and take some time to look at it.

5/ Keep a gratitude diary. Treat yourself to a nice new notebook and every morning write down three things that you're grateful for. Do the same every evening.

6/ Use positive affirmations. These retrain your brain into thinking healthier thoughts, but you need to repeat them several hundred times a day for them to really take effect. Always write your affirmations in the first person and present tense, eg "I feel calm and relaxed".

7/ "Let go or be dragged" goes the old Zen saying. Sometimes things go wrong for all of us and there's nothing we can do about them. But worrying about them increases our stress levels and makes matters much worse. Try to let go of your emotional attachment of what happens to you and life will feel a bit easier.