

## Session 2 Notes - Rewiring the Thought Process

What happens, is that we have a bunch of thoughts and then an emotional response is triggered when we think about how those thoughts make us feel and even as we allow that emotional response to pass, we're still in the habit of having the negative thoughts which initially put us into that state.

In order to break that negative thought sequence we have to do several things.

1. Is to allow the emotional response to self-regulate when it's triggered by allowing the associated intense and uncomfortable sensations. If we don't allow this part, we cannot feel better, so this is an essential first step. At the end of the emotional response is a very brief, feeling of peace. It might last for two seconds before your thoughts start up again.
2. This step may seem a little backwards. See, all those times throughout the day when you're trying to resist the thoughts that you are having, that's like a different type of an emotional response. That's more like a feeling separation, it's like an instant emotional, mental or physical disconnect. So it may not be uncomfortable sensation-wise, but it's mentally uncomfortable. If you try to resist it, just like resisting an emotional response, it will leave you feeling tangled, confused, misplaced and out of sync with yourself.
3. Step 3 is recognising when you're on a negative thought track and it's understanding that the negative thought track is simply there to show you what you don't want. Now what's been happening with you is that you've been getting stuck on the negative thought track and continually going around that circuit.
4. Step 4 is to start turning your attention to thoughts that make you feel a little better. Just a little better, it's like reaching for a thought about something which gives you a feeling of ease. Fur children are purrfect for this. They have an energy, an innocence a sense of playfulness and mischief and they constantly give us reasons to smile. When you're not feeling good about yourself a fur child will come and stick their nose into your hand or into your face to get you to turn your attention from a place of negativity to a place of brief connection. And have you ever noticed that a dog will insist on your attention when you're not feeling good about yourself? They will pester you and they will continue to pester you until they have your full attention. Animals are a great source of distraction to move you away from negative thoughts.

So as you start getting yourself into the habit of shifting your attention from a negative thought, to the associated emotional response, to stop fighting the awareness of resistance you have to the fact that you constantly appear to think on those negative thoughts, as you stop fighting that, you're incrementally turning yourself toward that which will make you feel better.

But you've got to keep interrupting yourself BECAUSE you're still in the habit of refocusing your attention back on that negative thought sequence.

You had this understanding that you needed help, you had this understanding that you needed to change something and you knew that you could do it, you knew that you had it in you and you knew that with a few new skills you could turn your life around.

You know when you change your point of focus like when your fur child insists on your attention and you start laughing at their antics or even just a smile because they're so focused on getting your attention and distracting you because animals know, animals know how to make you feel good, animals know that they're one of the fastest ways to make you feel better.

Have you noticed that you can just stroke an animal and you stroke that animal your attention switches to an awareness of their fur and how nice that feels, when they're in that nice smelling state and they just smell like themselves and you get lost in that moment of experiencing oneness with your animal and in the time that you're doing that you have no awareness of other thoughts. AND IT FEELS SO GOOD.

The good thing is that you cannot focus on thinking and feeling at the same time. Have you noticed times when you've absent mindedly stroked the dog and thought of a problem and felt no benefit from stroking the dog? If you're not experiencing that, it's brilliant because it shows that when you switch your attention to your dog you give him your full attention. And because your conscious mind can only focus on one thing at a time, you're focused in the present moment with your dog.

You get to choose in any given moment WHERE you are putting your focus. And where you choose to put your focus determines how good you feel... or not.

When you resist the fact that you're thinking negatively it's much harder to change your point of focus. This is because you're fighting yourself, you're fighting the fact that you're thinking about something which you don't want to think about. You're fighting the fact that those thoughts make you feel sad, make you agitated and make you feel unworthy. And make you lose sight of the wondrous being that you are, you completely lose yourself in the imaginations of your mind. And that's when you go into that negative downward spiral. And that's when your dog comes and puts his nose in your hand, because he feels you.

So when your dog comes and puts his nose in your hand, switch your full attention to him. He's your feeling fix, he's been gifted to you. He's there to help you become more present. He's there to guide you into good feeling, because that's what you experience when you are in his presence. When you're in his insisted presence. And as you focus on those feelings, the fur feelings, the feelings of connection you have with this dog, then negative thoughts in that moment, disappear. Because your conscious mind can only focus on one thing at a time. As

you choose to put your focus on your feeling of connection with your dog, you automatically start feeling better. In that moment.

Now if we switch your attention to thoughts of your husband, what feeling does that generate in you? Mixed feelings and mixed emotions which have more to do with the related imaginary conversations you are having with him. The imagined questions and the imagined answers.

When we have these imaginary conversations there are two paths we can go down. One path fills up with doubt, with questioning, with confusion, with anxiety and makes us feel heavy and burdened. And the more we delve into those mental conversations, the more our mind takes us into the rabbit warren. It just spirals us down.

Now there's a different conversation you can have and this conversation involves reaching for higher thoughts, reaching for thoughts that make you feel just a little bit better. It could be thoughts such as, you imagine your husband saying, hi how was your day? And even though the reality of your day might have been, well, I was trying not to worry about you and what you might be doing with your clients and I was trying to not to think about how you feel toward me and I was not feeling very happy and I really wasn't content and I just worried about what the future might bring.

Whereas in *this* imagined conversation, you would imagine a different reply. And you just reach for a happier version of the day you experienced. Which could go something like: Well... I thought about what a fun day you might be having because I know you really love your work, and Ozzie and I were hanging out and he was putting his nose into my hand, you know, like he does when he wants your attention and I was just thinking of how lucky I am to have such a wonderful dog and a husband I love and how nice it is that we can talk about these things, even if it's only in my imagination. You're making up a new story as you go, and even as you may see the current story still playing out in front of your eyes, see people tell you to be realistic, but what we're telling you is to tell as you want to see it. It takes practice because we've been having these imagined conversations for years, many years. And so it will take a bit of practice to change your story and this is why you need to do it incrementally.

How do you know when you're going off track? You feel like crap, mentally, physically or emotionally, that's your guidance system, if you're not feeling good, you're imagination is just taking you off track. And 99% of what we imagine is rubbish. It's just pure BS imagined crap. But what it does, is it completely takes us off our game. It makes us see things that aren't there, imagine things that aren't happening, it creates such a wall of resistance that no one can communicate around it.

And because we can't change how our conscious mind works, it's always going to be thinking, it's always going to naturally turn toward figuring out the answers towards pain and problems and so if we're imagining pain and problems, then our conscious mind is going to exacerbate those and pull them apart and rearrange them and reorder them and drive us crazy. Because that's how the mind works.

So what we need to do, is feed it another story, a story that makes us feel good. Because if you don't lead the direction of your thoughts you'll end up defaulting back to random thoughts that you have habitually thought about and this happens because it's easy, it's easier to think of those thoughts because they've always been there. So you don't have to get over those thoughts, you've just got to turn them around when you notice that they're taking you down that unwanted track.

As soon as you notice it you have the power to change direction. For example when you're with your dog and thinking about your dog, you have these delicious, light, yummy feelings and emotions.