

MIND MATTERS

How to stop yourself from overthinking



CHARLIE HOGG

Our world is no longer the same as it was. It has been turned upside down. The events took almost everyone by surprise and everyone's thinking went into overdrive. The media bombarded us every day with information and a variety of experts gave their opinions on what might happen, and everywhere there has been uncertainty and anxiety. Where does all that information ultimately land?—in the mind!

Overthinking is one of the most damaging thought patterns of all. An overactive mind instigates rash and rushed actions, and we spend time with fast-moving technology, sound bites, video bites, and seem to move from phones to

computers to TVs. The reason why many spend so much time doing this is that in a way it serves a purpose. It stops us from looking inside to contemplate what the purpose of life might really be. From time to time, we become aware of what we are doing, and we try to chill out, take time out, and if we manage some moments of peace, the feeling is so sweet. But sometimes we find emptiness inside, like a big deep sadness, a sense of meaninglessness to everything, and that is a very uncomfortable feeling, so we change gear into overdrive again and become busier and busier so that we do not have to think too deeply.

There are roughly about 70,000 thoughts created in a waking day of 16 hours. We can think at about 500 words a minute but only speak at about 125 words a minute, and our mind can be aware on seven different levels at any given moment. That is a lot of activity! Our lives are played out in our minds. Thoughts, reac-



tions, feelings, memories all take place in our minds. The way we interpret anything depends on the quality of thinking we have been able to achieve and the wisdom we have been able to accumulate. The most important thing I can do at the present time is to learn more about who I am and what is the greatest influence on my thinking, and with love and wisdom take back the internal authority I have lost.

I have to take responsibility for my thoughts.

Each thought is my creation. People may be difficult and situations will come and ultimately, I have the choice—I can overthink or not. If I do just this one thing, take responsibility for each thought in my mind, it will change my life. If I am complaining, criticising, blaming everyone around me for my feelings, then I completely disempower myself. Spirituality is empowering myself to choose the quality of thought that helps me remain peaceful and keeps me happy.

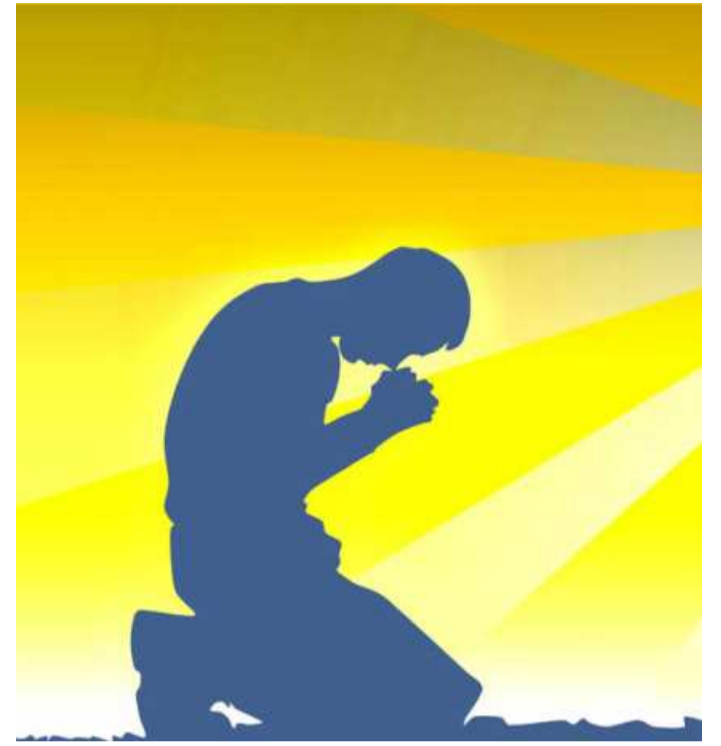
I can begin by reprogramming my understanding of who I really am. If I am a body, then either ego or a sense of superiority emerges or a lack of self-respect and a feeling of unworthiness or inferiority emerge. All actions are then based on that awareness. The 7.9 billion human beings are working on that premise and with the subsequent ego or lack of self-respect. It is time to look within at the real self, the soul. Then, with the awareness of the eternal qualities of the soul, of

peace, love and joy, let those feelings calm and nourish the mind, slow down the thought patterns and be the foundation of my words and actions. Taking time each day to replenish this awareness in meditation and a connection with the Supreme Soul empowers the soul to regain internal authority and reclaim the mastery of the mind.

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BALANCE

FAITH AND WISDOM



DADI JANKI

Devotional feelings are pure ones consisting of sweetness and innocence. They are feelings of faith in God, but they can be shaken.

Faith, without some wisdom to back it up, may fail you in a moment of need. Both are needed for long-term spiritual attainment; like feeling close to God and close to others, too in an unshakeable way. Or having true feelings, no matter what, becoming spiritually accomplished.

If either faith or wisdom is lacking, your life cannot function right. It is like understanding your doctor's prescription but somehow not trusting it anyway. It leaves you feeling unsure. So have a dialogue between your feelings and your understanding. They need to know each other and work together well!

INNER ENVIRONMENT

CLIMATE CHANGE FROM THE INSIDE OUT



SYLVIA ISMAIL

As we approach the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), 31 October to 12 November 2021, the eyes of the world are on Glasgow, a former industrial and shipbuilding city in Scotland. The talk is of mitigation, adaptation and climate finance, of limiting the rise in global temperatures and harmful emissions.

It is easy to feel confused, even lost, amid the jargon and the torrent of facts and figures. Climate anxiety is growing, especially among younger age

groups. Notably, in a recent interview, Britain's Prince William highlighted his concern for his young family.

And yet there is so much we can do, individually and collectively, to raise our thinking to a place of hope and to believe in action as a force for good.

The first step is to recognise that every single one of us can access an inner world that is far richer than any material possessions the external world has to offer. Once we recognise this, our acquisitiveness—the desire to possess material wealth and objects, the urge to achieve status in the world—diminishes.

Instead of measuring ourselves against others in a spirit of competition, straining to outdo their success, we choose to connect with our inner self and draw strength from the Supreme. The way to do this is through meditation, the quiet



focusing of all our energy on the deeper consciousness that lies like a tranquil lake at the very core of our being.

With time and practice, our striving evaporates and we achieve a balance—calm, fulfilled, and genuinely, deeply

happy. A little further down the road, we begin to stabilise in this state, so that, no matter what happens, we are able to maintain the balance.

The qualities we are rediscovering translate into a different way of living, and a new way of

interacting with the world. No longer either needy or greedy, we are content with a simple lifestyle and grateful for what we have. Our inner transformation creates an outer balance between ourselves and others—and, indeed, all of

nature. With the generosity of spirit, we are ready to put our abundant energy to positive use, doing whatever we can to care for the environment and for those around us. There is nothing forced or insincere about this: It comes naturally and surprisingly easily. As we repeat these actions, they become part of our own nature, ingrained habits of kindness and care for others.

Imagine what the world would be like if we joined together to apply these qualities at the community, national, or even international, level! Multilateral talks would go smoothly, agreements would follow quickly, and action would be taken unhesitatingly.

Sylvia Ismail is a writer and editor with a background in public affairs, radio broadcasting, and journalism.

A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

When I am afraid of an obstacle, it has power over me. When I see the obstacle for what it really is, a life lesson designed to strengthen me, I become bigger than even the fiercest thing in front of me. My change of awareness gives me the power to detach from fear. Then I can smile and see the obstacle as a paper tiger, knowing I will conquer it. Today let me conquer obstacles by changing my awareness.

CONNECTION

STOP STRESS FROM DAMAGING YOUR IMMUNITY



DR JUDITH KOCKEN

In most countries of the world, the majority of diseases are chronic instead of acute. Chronic diseases are called psychosomatic. A part of the cause is psychological - this means that the cause is generated by thoughts and emotions, and is therefore very difficult to examine. The other part is physical, visible and can be measured. The brain absorbs the ener-

gy of thoughts and emotions. The energy is transported to the hormone system and lymph system. Together they form the immune system, which protects the body. A child develops an immune system that starts in the womb of the mother. The physical, mental, and emotional health of the parents have an impact on the immune system of an unborn child. When a child grows up, it then encounters antigens in the form of viruses, bacteria and other microorganisms. In a healthy situation, the body makes antibodies so that the child does not become sick. The immune system develops through physical contact with other people, food, environment, and micro-or-

ganisms. A person deprived of this contact, say in situations of social isolation and/or excessive cleaning or no cleaning at all for a long period of time, may develop an unhealthy immune system. Thoughts and emotions have an impact on the functioning of the immune system. How to make thoughts and emotions so positive and strong so that they strengthen the immune system?

Stress is a physical reaction to something that is experienced as truth. A stress reaction can be acute or chronic. Most people experience one or more stressful events in their lives. There are several forms of stress:

1. Universal: absence of information or fake news. Every chronic or repetitive



2. Physical: chronic disease, injury, operation.
3. Chemical: food, viruses, bacteria, pesticides, Wi-Fi, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, soft drinks
4. Emotional: family circumstances, secrets, debt,

5. Divorce, disease, death, trauma, abuse, manipulation, neglect, work problems.

Chronic stress suppresses the immune system. Scientific research shows that three in four people with heart problems, high blood pressure, Diabetes Type 2, gastric ulcers, rheumatic disease, skin problems, autoimmune

diseases and cancer have a weakened immune system. Chronic stress symptoms, including extreme fatigue, anxiety, sleep disorders, chronic abdominal pain or palpitations may require a visit to a doctor in the first instance.

The immune system can be strengthened. The first step is to recognise and accept that you are in fact experiencing stress and it is uncomfortable. The next step is to acknowledge that you are not alone in this. Everyone feels stressed at one time or another. Then it is a matter of discovering what would be most helpful and being very kind to the self; wish peace for the self and be prepared for this state of peace to take a little time, and not search

for a quick fix. Slow down, walk slower, speak less, do less instead of more—all this helps to reduce the feelings of stress in the immediate short term.

Before sleep each evening, there are some positive things you can reflect on or do to strengthen the immune system and write them down in a journal. Take a shower, listen to some music, listen to a guided meditation before you settle down to the reflections.

1. This is what I liked about today
2. This is what I did not like about today
3. This is what made me laugh out loud today
4. I feel grateful for ...
5. I was kind to myself in this situation today

6. I practised taking a pause before reacting in this situation today

A human being has more than 70,000 thoughts a day, 90% of which we are not aware of. Meditation is a method to learn about who you are and what is going on in your mind. During meditation, we can create positive thoughts and create new neural pathways in the mind so that faith and trust in the self can become part of your life. Stress will diminish and the immune system will be strengthened.

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