

Quincy

Data about our imbedded negative bias is striking. According to their “Love Lab” over decades of observing couples, veteran marriage counselors John Gottman and wife Julie Schwarz Gottman (Eight Dates) found that successful relationships have a 20 to 1 ratio of positive to negative. That means it takes 20 positive responses to balance one negative one.

No wonder people who grew up surrounded in unsupportive, critical or abusive homes feel so trapped by negativity, by their own mind that keeps repeating the negative diatribes of childhood. But each of us has the power to recreate our mind-talk—regardless of the trauma of past relationships.

In his new book *Mind Medicine: Use Your Thoughts to Heal*, Dr. Mahmoud Rashidi, an author and neurosurgeon in Mont Vernon, who himself has recovered from a brain tumor, speaks from his own experience as doctor and patient about the power of the mind to heal the body. It begins with the power of the imagination.

Rashidi: “Imagination is the workshop of the mind. This is your workshop and you have all the tools you need to make anything you want....Your vision needs to be bigger than your current circumstances.”

Why does it matter? According to Rashidi, thoughts can change the brain and change the body by changing the brain. Rashidi: “That is so important when you are ill; do not visualize your current circumstances....If you can imagine that you are already healed, it will have a stronger effect on your brain and as a result, on your body. It is very important that you believe what you visualize will happen.”

In this case, actions are really louder than words; the link between thought and action is a continuous physiological loop. Actions trigger thoughts and emotion. Rashidi: “You actually act your way into the feeling which corresponds to that action....Your physical state affects your mind and thoughts.” According to Rashidi, even little things like the way you sit, stand, or walk influences feelings. Through neuro-association, “the brain learns to associate certain postures with certain thoughts and feelings.

Happy people stand and walk differently from people with depression....Your physiology affects your thinking.”

Because the brain is habitual, it likes repetition, it goes into automatic pilot easily. Rashidi suggests that to successfully stop one habit of thought or behavior, it helps to replace the old habit with a new one in order to create new neural pathways.

For this reason, young brains are more vulnerable. Rashidi: “What a child and adolescent do daily is more crucial than an adult....the rational part of the brain has not developed yet and they act based on their emotions...without thinking about the negative consequences later on. Their brain also has more plasticity and they learn it faster and the structure of the brain will change, therefore, it will be more difficult to change behavior later on.”

That wise persona Anonymous said it best: “A negative mind will never give you a positive life.”

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