

MASTER YOUR THOUGHTS

MASTER YOUR LIFE

MENTAL MECHANICS

A REPAIR MANUAL

Douglas McKee, CRNA

MENTAL MECHANICS: A REPAIR MANUAL

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Introduction

This is a book about thinking. It is a very important work, and would be so even if I weren't the author. It is important because the human thought process is the most misunderstood and poorly controlled part of our life, and it creates almost all the negative emotions we have. Negative emotions cause probably 99 percent of all the suffering on the planet. Fear alone destroys more lives each year than all diseases and wars combined. Control through fear is the driving force behind all governments and all but a few religions. Mankind has gone just about as far as possible using systems built on fear, guilt, and dependency.

There is some validity to the old saying, "You can't teach old dogs new tricks." It's not that old dogs can't learn but, like humans, they just can't see any reason why they should, so they don't. Studies verify this by demonstrating that the likelihood of making significant changes in our lifestyle begins nearing zero as we approach thirty-five years of age. After that, it takes a really traumatic event such as a near-fatal heart attack to get us to change.

We need to change our ways, but change is one thing humans don't really do well. Why do we put so much energy into resisting it when change is the true order of all things? What part, if any, does learning play in our lives if that is true? Obviously, the vast majority of humans reach a point in their lives where they believe they know "enough," whatever that means, and almost everything "new" presented to them after that doesn't get assimilated.....

The great works of spiritual literature lead us, sometimes not too gently, to the conclusion that we can only learn what we truly are, by learning what we are not. This thing we call our self, our ego, our personality, is only a collection of our own personal experiences and our habitual ways of responding to them since the moment we were born. It is not who we really are. Our inability to recognize this is the root cause of all our conflicts and negative emotions because we currently believe we are what we have done or what we think has been done to us. Our thinking process is faulty, and only when we understand it can we use it correctly.

Contrary to all the disempowering ads on TV telling us our lives will be marvelous if we take magic pills for anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, or any of many emotional conditions based in fear, pills only keep us believing that we are helpless and powerless to change our own lives; that the "fix" for everything in our life is external.

The only way to get rid of the fear that accompanies negative emotions is to understand how we ourselves internally create those negative emotions. Once we can see how the process works, we can think in a way that doesn't create them.

Only when we are able to let go of our sad, scared, or angry soap opera thinking habits can we see our world from a much higher and more inclusive perspective. We can then understand on a very deep level that Peace is our natural state and that our life still has the potential to be what we, as children, thought it could be.

As its chapters unfold, *Mental Mechanics* can help you to do just that, first by showing how we accumulate, store, and process information as individuals, and second, how we use those processes when we interact with others. In gaining an understanding of our thought processes, we can cease being the slave of our ego and become its master.

Chapter 1

KNOWLEDGE

Before we can put human knowledge into perspective we must develop a workable understanding of the concepts of thinking and thoughts. Thinking is the processing of information, and thoughts are the information which is being processed. All humans think, all process information, in exactly the same way. When we understand the thinking process, we can more easily understand why other people are the way they are, and our acceptance and tolerance levels rise dramatically.

Thoughts are the products of experiences with families, teachers, church and whatever else has influenced us combined with our stubborn individualism and rebellion. This is exactly the same process a group of people goes through to form a culture or a society. Primal forces such as location, weather and food supplies have huge effects on the shared information, mythology and theology of the group. It is fairly easy to understand that the culture and religion of a tribe from a harsh desert could be vastly different than those from a lush tropical island or a forest in the far north.

Because every person comes from a different background, community and family, everyone's experiences are different. Each person develops a unique self, a unique set of thoughts based on experiences, which he accepts as an accurate description of the world around him.

The simple fact that each person's thoughts are unlike anyone else's causes the majority of our problems. We try to believe that our

thoughts are the same as everyone else's. But from conception to death, our life experiences are individual and unique. When we try to communicate with someone whose thoughts are obviously very different, we just can't understand why they don't, or won't, understand. Do you remember pouring out your heart to your parents about some huge emotional crisis only to realize they did not understand a word you said? Awareness of uniqueness begins early in life, and you need to understand how it comes about.

By the time a child is five years old, he has acquired seventy-five percent of all the knowledge he will ever have. The implications of this are incredible. Because children do not have large vocabularies, learning takes place by a much simpler method. They learn to interpret the world by watching the actions of those around them. What others do teaches children what is important. Actions do speak louder than words. Obviously, we will learn other things in our lifetime, but the origins of the majority of our adult thoughts are found in the early years.

Children are taught to focus on the differences between things in order to identify them correctly. By the time they become adolescents, they are aware of almost nothing else. They attempt to do everything alike as a way to belong, yet the feeling of belonging still eludes them. A parent searching for a child in a playground full of children is actually using the mechanism of rejecting the children who do not fit that particular child's precise image.

Since our learning method is based on becoming aware of differences and our experiences are different, we eventually become practically unable to recognize and accept similarities.

It is necessary to understand that experiences form thoughts. In other words, thoughts are simply opinions about personal experiences. It is only natural that you look to your experiences to define the world. But unless you become aware of the unique and individual nature of your thoughts, you will always believe the world is accurately described and defined by your limited experiences. You may live and die and never become aware of the real world which actually exists apart from your perception of reality.

Chapter 2

EMOTIONS

Emotions are the physical sensations produced by our thought summaries and data base conclusions. Another way to look at emotions is that they are what we feel about something or a situation. They aren't the something or the situation itself, simply what we feel about it. Emotions usually appear spontaneously but are actually completely controllable. Uncontrolled emotions often lead to making unreasonable choices. It is usually a conflict between what you want to happen and what you believe will happen that generates the negative emotions which sometimes seem to dominate our life.

Can emotions exist apart from thoughts? Is fear a real entity? Does it have an existence of its own, like a tree, a dog or a shirt? Are anger, loneliness, doubt, pleasure or any other emotion any different? No! They are not! These are feelings you have only while you are thinking about "something". This is very important and bears repeating. An emotion is a feeling you have about something only while you are thinking about it. When you stop thinking about it, the feeling goes away.

This implies that if you stop thinking about whatever is causing emotional distress then you will be better immediately. In fact, this is exactly what you should do and what you can learn to do.

But you must first understand the mechanics of emotions, especially negative ones..

Chapter 3

NEEDS AND WANTS

Many conflicts in life come from confusing needs with wants. For this reason, the differences between the two must be made crystal clear. If you stop and evaluate your desires, you can see plainly that most of them are simply not necessary for survival. Desire for something is an emotional conclusion from the data base that you have discovered something which will make you happier, wealthier, more desirable, etc.. Because you don't have it, action is undertaken to acquire it.

I wish someone would tell me what has happiness in it so I could get one. Is there a college that can give me a degree in Happiness? Can I put it on my charge card? Because the data base has no concept of Happiness other than accumulating, it can make no distinction between the two.

Often needs and wants are used as synonyms, but their meanings are actually very different. Needs are necessary for growth, development and maintenance. Humans all have the same needs: food, shelter and emotional nurturing, or Love. To define something as a need is to recognize its essential nature. Words or thoughts cannot satisfy real needs.

Want on the other hand is defined in the dictionary as: "To fail to have; to be without; to lack." When we want something we just don't have it. As an example of the difference, let's look at a famine. The people need food. We all need food. However, they also want for food because they have none.

Because the confusion between wants and needs causes so much conflict, we are going to take a very close look at the mechanics involved. Although we spend a great deal of life focused on what we lack and how to get it, we are still basically not content. Obviously, we don't understand what is important enough to make a real effort to obtain.

Chapter 4

VALUES AND SELF-ESTEEM

Each of us has a great task and wonderful opportunity in life to learn to relate to our fellow human beings in a truly meaningful way. In order to accomplish this, we must first learn what is genuinely important, what actually has value and what does not. Personal values must be formulated that do not change with every situation. Many times now we have no idea what is going to be right tomorrow because we did not know what was right today. Knowing what we know now about self, it's easy to see how a discussion of values usually creates problems rather than promotes consensus.

The main reason such an abundance of problems plagues our world today is that each self has a different idea of what is important. This creates individual value systems. Each of us insists on believing in our own value system and life becomes a battle instead of an ongoing process of learning and sharing. Everyone we meet becomes a potential enemy because they are different from us. This knowledge that we are somehow different also makes us believe that everyone else must be wrong. The only possible results are feelings of separateness and loneliness. We can never learn to trust, to feel secure or to feel we belong until we give up the notion of the absoluteness of the self and find common values.

Historically, tribal cultures have had shared values based on what is good for the entire tribe, not just one individual. Awareness of these shared values was evident by their

inclusion in the tribal members' daily lives. Spiritual values took precedence over most other aspects of life because people understood their existence to be only a part of the total Life process. Life had gone on long before they began taking part in it, and it would continue after they ceased participating.

These tribal values focused primarily on meeting needs. Because these cultures had a more workable understanding of real needs, they allowed the concept of "enough" to exist. Enough meant sufficient food and shelter for the body and the continual awareness that, even though they were now physical, their spirits were an integral part of an eternal process. They also understood their decisions would have lasting effects. This awareness created the basis for an accepted common value system for each member of the tribe.

Our "tribe" has forgotten this as evidenced by the significant negative consequences we have incurred because we have acted hastily, on the level of the individual as well as countries. Western cultures have long rejected any real relationship between values and daily living.

Chapter 5

LOVE

Leon Bloy said, "There is only one sadness, the sadness of not being a Saint." Antoine de Saint-Exupery cried, "What is essential is invisible." Paul, in his letter to the Romans wrote, "Be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." The *Upanishads* say that if you take one step toward God, He will take ten steps toward you. St. John of the Cross declared the ground of Love lies not in our Love for God, but in His having Loved us from the beginning. Dante said the same Love that moves our heart moves the sun and stars.

Although the Messengers have been many, their message is the same. Love is not just something wonderful that happens to us if we are lucky. Learning to Love unconditionally is the true goal of every human because Love is the very expression of Life Itself, it's what we are.

Accepting the validity of that statement is easy enough, but understanding and being able to experience that kind of Love is not. We each expend a great amount of effort "looking for love in all the wrong places," when the real problem is that our understanding is not sufficient. Until now, we have been studying the mechanisms which create the image of what we think we are, why we believe we are that image and the conflict created by belief in that image. Freeing ourselves from the false is a

necessary step in being able to experience and embrace the true.

Belief in and dependence on the self keeps you from being able to experience the Love you are. The Thinker is Love, the self is thoughts. To accept the self as an accurate interpretation keeps us from being able to access the Thinker.

Chapter 6

RELATIONSHIPS

Since most of our lives are spent in the presence of others, we need to look at relationships. We are related, in a sense, to everything in our world. At this time, we relate to the world around us by projecting our data base onto it and reacting to that projection. In the data base we see ourselves as products of these relationships. When we Love, we realize giving and sharing are the only true basis for a relationship, for Love is what we are.

Someone once said that when you truly love someone, you do not want anything from him or her. What do you really want from your best friend? Nothing! All you want is to be close to her and share time with her. This important point needs to be made clear. When we are sharing, we are content. The inner realization that the sharing itself is all that is needed brings contentment to a relationship. True sharing is Love.

Chapter 7

PARENTING

If you want to witness one of the best examples of a Love relationship, take a look at a loving mother with her infant. Although their communication is obviously non-verbal, it is most accurate. How many times does a mother intuitively realize her baby needs something even though they're separated by walls and doors? How many times does she wake up from a sound sleep to tend a baby who hasn't even made a sound? This relationship usually lasts until the baby begins to learn to communicate with words. Then, we adults quit listening to his non-verbal communication and insist he communicate with words.

After becoming accustomed to the accurate and instantaneous unspoken bond, it must be confusing and frightening for a child to be required to learn to communicate in the inaccurate and ambiguous world of words. When they were at this stage, I thought my own children were willful, to say the least. We had been taught to expect it, and it was called the "terrible twos." Now I believe they were simply frightened and frustrated because they could not communicate.

Chapter 8

WORK

Each of us must work. Work is how we show ourselves and the world that we can take care of ourselves and our families, and much of our self-esteem depends on it. The ability to work is the ability to be self-determined. We must learn to see work as a setting which allows us the opportunity to meet our needs for shelter and food through our own valid effort.

In work, as in life, it is your own evaluation of your effort which leads to personal satisfaction or a feeling of dissatisfaction. When you are sure that you're doing your work to the very best of your ability, you feel good about yourself. And it usually pays off in other ways too. Most employers go to great lengths to keep an employee who puts everything he has into his work.

Since all emotions are generated internally, most of your feelings about your job are based on how well you think you perform it, not on the job itself. Personal happiness and sense of satisfaction are dependent on how you judge your effort.

Chapter 9

FIX-IT-YOURSELF

Now that you have an understanding of how the self works, you can see that many problems come from choosing actions based on thoughts in trying to meet a need with a want. Many other difficulties stem from interpreting the actions of others in light of your own experiences, and still others are results of misunderstanding fear and emotions. But most problems come about when you believe you are what you are thinking. But now you know you aren't what you think, right?

Looking at the content of the data base for what it is --simply data-- allows you to remove most of the emotional hooks which bind you to the past. Do not deny that you had a specific experience. Simply understand that your attitude and choice of action now is the expression of choice now, and it can no longer be based or blamed on the past or another person.

As we have discussed, action is the key to the Happiness of high self-esteem. Living is Action; thinking is just sorting data. By choosing actions based on the Human Agenda you ensure that your needs are met by helping others meet theirs. Most of the conflict in your life disappears when you are busy extending yourself in loving action. Self-esteem rises, reinforced by the see-learn-do-results learning cycle. The Universe gives back what we give out.