

"You're Right!" The Power of Our Thoughts

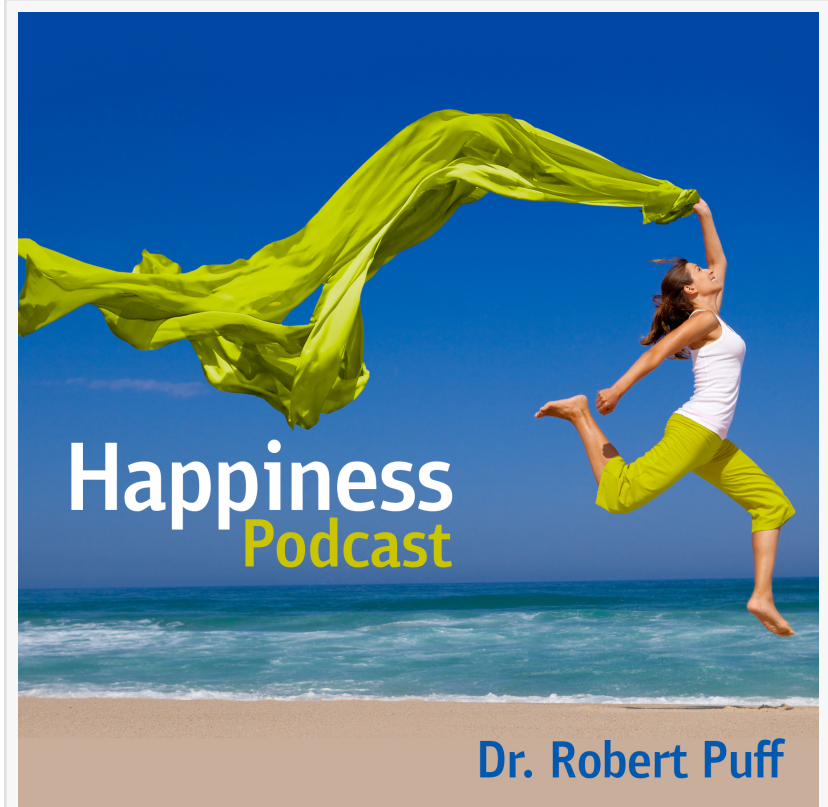
What we feed our minds and reinforce with our thoughts creates our reality, good or bad. By changing our thoughts, we change our world.

NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA, USA, October 26, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Did you happen to see the movie *A Beautiful Mind*? It was released in 2001 to great critical success, and it won four Academy Awards, including best picture.

The main character of the film, played by Russell Crowe, is John Nash, a real-life mathematician who actually won the Nobel prize, as the movie depicts, and also suffered from schizophrenia, as Crowe masterfully interprets.

Schizophrenia is a terrible mental illness that involves hearing and seeing things that aren't actually there. People with schizophrenia believe that what they are seeing and hearing is real. Typically, these hallucinations are extremely negative ones that center on the person with the illness. Nash, for example, heard voices in his head that told him constantly that he was a failure. Even though the world saw him as a great success, Nash could not believe that this was true because of his schizophrenia. Not even distinguished positions at some of the world's greatest universities or accolades as high as the Nobel Prize could convince him otherwise. Part of Nash's hallucination was that he was a failure, even as he was admired throughout the world.

I share all of this to explain the importance of our thoughts. Whether they are positive or negative, our thoughts are powerful. They matter. They help to determine the course of our lives. Even if the whole world disagrees with our thoughts, we are going to follow what we know inside to be true, even if, like John Nash, there is a more enlightened and accurate way to see ourselves. Thoughts have their own energy, and they take off, if we let them.

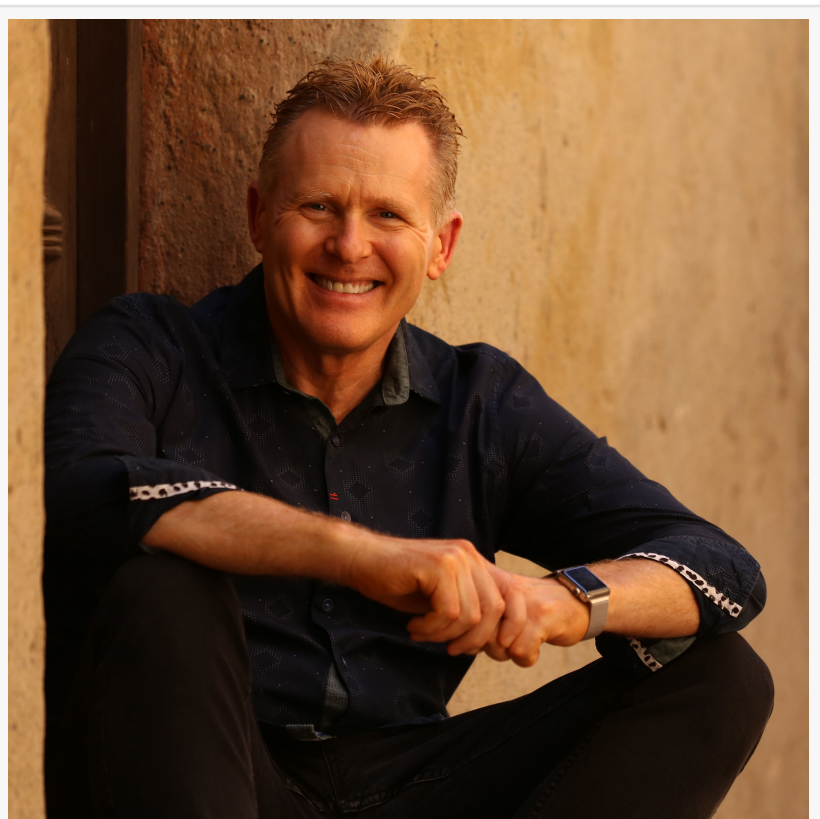


Happiness Podcast

I once read a study about models. Some of the most beautiful people in the world are models, yet when asked if they consider themselves beautiful, this researched revealed the surprising fact that most did not. Most models felt they were average, and most reported being dissatisfied with some noticeable flaw to their appearance. Gracing the covers of magazines and walking the world's most elite runways didn't shake these models' views that they were ordinary, or even less than ordinary.

It's possible that you're reading these examples, and you're wondering what these words have to do with you. You may be thinking, "I'm not a supermodel or a brilliant mathematician. I'm just an average Joe." I won't try to convince you otherwise, because the bottom line is that you're absolutely right. We are always right, and whatever we think about ourselves is true and correct. When John Nash said, "I'm not good enough," he was right. When supermodels say, "I'm just not that pretty," they're right. Our thoughts control our perception, and there is no sense trying to convince someone with negative thoughts about themselves that they are wrong.

It's possible that you are someone who takes affirmations very seriously, and you look into your mirror every day and make a positive statement about who you're going to be or what you're going to achieve. That's a great practice, and I encourage it. but I'm not talking about what we are going to be. I'm talking about what we see right now when we look at ourselves in the mirror, whether it is



Dr. Robert Puff



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real or metaphorical.

Whatever we are feeding our minds, that's what we are. Our thoughts are so powerful that they actually do shape our reality. Never mind the fact that they may have nothing to do with what's true or apparent to others. What we feed our minds is what we believe, and what we believe is our truth.

I have been fortunate to travel around the world and I've paid close attention to the people I've encountered. The people in different places in the world experience different standards of living from one another and from many of us who live in the United States. Billions of people throughout the world live in comfortable but modest living situations and share their homes with their family and even their extended family.

In Egypt I met a man who was a dentist, and he was excited about the fact that he was going to be married. He was planning to put up a sheet in his apartment to separate a small quarter reserved for him and his future wife from the space occupied by the rest of his extended family. He was very happy at the prospect of his future life. Although he was a dentist, he did not yet make a lot of money, and this modest arrangement was one he could afford and one that brought him thoughts of joy.

Can you imagine a practicing dentist in the United States being satisfied with this arrangement? We have so much more here than many people in the world possess, and yet we don't feel like it. What we have doesn't make us happy because we compare ourselves to those who have more. It is our mind at work again, giving us a message that we receive as the truth, despite what the experiences of most others throughout the world would make of our interpretation.

I don't want to focus on whether our thoughts are right or wrong. Rather, the important takeaway is that our thoughts matter. What we are thinking throughout the day? These thoughts determine the quality of our lives and even the outcomes of our actions.

Perhaps we go through the day recognizing that we don't have as much as someone else, or that we don't have enough. Or perhaps we think very differently, and we go through the day feeling gratitude, joy, and thankfulness because we have been so richly blessed. Either thought is true.

If we feel we do not have enough, we suffer. This is true, even if in the world's eyes we have everything we could possibly need. The root cause of our suffering is not what we have or don't have, or what we've accomplished or not accomplished. At the base of our suffering is our thoughts about our lives

What we are feeding our minds throughout the day will be our reality. This is true even if our reality is madness. What we are feeding our minds matters.

It is important to note that schizophrenia is a genetic disorder that is normally treated with

medication. John Nash didn't like the effects of the medication that he experienced, so ultimately, he decided he'd live his life and train himself to ignore his hallucinations. That was certainly a risky choice, since schizophrenia can be a life-threatening mental illness. But nevertheless, the power of our thoughts is amazing, as Nash's experience demonstrates.

It's important to assess what we are feeding ourselves in the form of our thoughts. What is our mental and emotional diet? Is it helpful? Is it beautiful? Is it helping us to have beautiful lives? If not perhaps it's time to stop paying attention to them, or to change them, or to let them go.

The first thing we have to do is discover what it is that we are thinking about all day long. This involves a straightforward assessment without judgment. We must take a walk past the metaphorical mirror and take a look. Maybe we are saying, "I'm bad," "I'm ugly," or "I'm stupid." Do we like these feelings? Probably not. So let's focus on something else.

John Nash could still see his hallucinations, but he made the remarkable choice to focus on what was real. If our thoughts are hurting us, we should focus on other things. If our thoughts about ourselves are negative, they will only lead to suffering. If we are to live happy lives — and obviously that is our goal, since we are meeting here in the space — we need to take control of the thoughts that hurt us.

The thoughts we experience have to do with all parts of our lives. Maybe we focus our attention on our looks, our success, our health, or even where we live. All of factors things have the ability to cause us to suffer if we allow them to, or if we go on wishing our lives were different.

I live and work in southern California. Public transportation here is not the best, and most of us get around by car. When we get a car, usually we love the feeling. We can get ourselves around from place to place and be productive while doing what we enjoy. But then we get on the road, and we can't help but notice that others have nicer cars than we do. We might think, "My car is ugly" or "I hate it." These are the sorts of thoughts we create all day long. But we have a choice in the thoughts we express or believe.

I work in the city of Newport Beach, which is one of the wealthiest communities in the world. No matter the car you have, there is always one that is nicer, and it is our tendency to look at the nicer cars and make a comparison. We do this with so many aspects of our lives. We think we are not good enough or we are not pretty enough, and this can cause us to suffer, but there is really no need to. We can just as easily look at ourselves and our lives and even our vehicles and say, "I am so grateful for what I have." Our sense of peace increases when we realize the power of our thoughts.

One final step we can take is a hard one, but so worthwhile. I talk about it often, so it may sound familiar, but it is this: Stop paying attention to your thoughts. Instead just be. Instead of shifting your attention to positive things, just live in the now, and really savor each moment and each breath. We don't need to label everything as good or bad. Rather, we can choose to experience each new breath with wonder as if we are experiencing it for the first time. If we think about the

car analogy, perhaps we can stop thinking about whether our car is pretty or nice or fast, and instead we can experience it as if it is brand new and we are driving for the very first time. We can say, "Wow! I have a car!" And we can exhilarate in the feeling of the wind whipping through the windows and the speed with which we get from here to there.

When we look at our car, we can choose to see an experience a car — just a car. It is a mechanical wonder, and having one opens up the doors of many possibilities for our lives. What an amazing thing!

In the very same way, we can look in the mirror and see a person. Wow! What a marvel of creation! What a glorious presence! We don't need to see ourselves as tall or short, fat or thin, accomplished or otherwise. We can choose to live well, one breath at a time, just as we so beautifully are.

Sometimes the world seems to think highly of us. Other times, it does not. But I'm making the choice just to suck the marrow out of life. When we need to shift our thoughts to something else, we can — or we can just enjoy the presence and stillness of living life one moment at a time.

Thoughts That Bring Joy

Have you found yourself in a spiral of negative thinking that seems to zap the joy from your life? You can change your thinking (though I hope you'll hang on until the next section, when I offer contrasting, and I believe, better, advice!).

Take up a position in front of your real (not metaphorical) mirror. Look at the dear person there! You know everything this person has experienced. You know how hard they've tried. You know what has brought them joy. You know what has hurt them.

You know what jolts this person from sleep in the night, just as you know their happy hammock daydreams. You've been through a lot with this person — so why have you been spending so much time thinking about the shape of their nose or the chip in their teeth or the contour of their waistline?

Try to picture this person as a tiny baby — perfectly innocent and unblemished, new to this beautiful world. Can you love this person that way? How about as a toddler? A first-grader? A freshman in high school? At some point, you decided to judge this beautiful creation, but you don't have to. That infant is still there, barely able to focus. If you stare long enough, you're certain to see a smile.

Nothing in the mirror matters. Not the color of your eyes or hair. Not your cheekbones. Not some softness under your skin. But if you look closely enough, maybe you can see that innocent baby and recognize that its goodness and potential is still there. Don't stop looking until you

catch a glimpse.

Joy That Brings Joy

All of that stuff I said about looking in the mirror? You don't need to work that hard. The best thing you can do for yourself takes far less effort than this. I invite you to close your eyes and take a breath deep inside, to the bottom of your belly, and let it out with an audible sigh.

Take another, and hold it for a moment, then sigh it out again. Then take another.

With each breath, focus only on the breath — how it feels in your lungs, in your limbs, in your head. Don't even think about it; thinking is what got you into this situation. Just feel and be. Your body is a marvelous machine. It is the best car on the lot, because it transports your lovely spirit from here to there. Revel in it. Take it for a spin.

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If you would like to learn more, the latest episode of the [Happiness](#) Podcast, hosted and created by [Dr. Robert Puff](#), is now available. It is titled, "#296 Happiness - "Your Right" The Power of Our Thoughts" and can be listened to at:

<https://www.happinesspodcast.org/295-happiness-your-right-the-power-of-our-thoughts/>

Links to listen to the [Happiness Podcast](#):

<http://smarturl.it/HappinessPodcast>

About the Happiness Podcast hosted by Dr. Robert Puff:

Do you ever wonder what it takes to lead a peaceful, happy life? Are you curious about the specific steps involved in a self-actualized, limitless life? Are you struggling with anxiety or depression? Or are you just plain tired and want some help? We explore all these concerns and more every week on the Happiness Podcast, which has been downloaded over 9 million times since its inception. Happiness does not happen by chance, but because we take specific actions in our lives to create it.

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Happiness Podcast

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