The Thought of You

By Dr Joe Dispenza

I invite you to have a single thought, any thought. Whether you choose to think of feeling angry, sad, inspired, joyful or even sexually aroused, you've changed your body. You changed you. Even thoughts like, "I can't," "I'm not good enough, "no one cares," or even "I love you," have the same measurable effects. As you sit casually reading this magazine, without moving a single muscle, bear in mind that your body is capable of a host of dynamic changes. By thinking your most recent thought, did you know that suddenly your pancreas and your adrenal glands are already busy secreting a few new hormones? Adrenal glands, where are they? Like a sudden lightning storm, different areas of your brain just surged with increased electrical current, and you made a mob of neuro-chemicals that are too numerous to name. Your spleen and your thymus gland are sending out a mass e-mail to your immune system to make modifications. Several different gastric juices are now flowing. Your liver is now processing enzymes that were not present moments before. Your heart rate is modified, your lungs are changing their stroke volume and blood flow to the capillaries in your extremities is now different. All from just thinking one thought. You are that powerful.

But how are you capable of performing all of those actions? Whether we like it or not, once a thought happens in the brain, the rest seems like history. In other words, all of the bodily reactions that can occur from both our intentional or unintentional thinking unfold behind the scenes of our awareness. When you come right down to it, it is startling to realize how influential and extensive the effects of one or two conscious or unconscious thoughts can be. We all understand that the brain can manage and regulate many diverse functions throughout the rest of the body, but how responsible are we for those effects? Is it possible that the repeated chemical actions that occur from the seemingly unconscious thoughts we think daily create a cascade of chemical reactions that produce not only what we feel but how we feel? Can we accept that the long-term effects of our habitual thinking just might be the cause of how our bodies move to a state of imbalance, a dis-ease. Is it likely, moment by moment, that we train our bodies to be unhealthy by our repeated thoughts and reactions? What if just by thinking, we cause our very internal chemistry to be bumped out of normal range so much that the body's self-regulation system redefines these abnormal states as now normal regular states? It's a subtle process but maybe we just never gave it that much attention.

Since we are on the subject of attention, now I want you to pay attention, become aware and listen. Can you hear the hum of the refrigerator? The sound of a car passing by your home? A distant dog barking? How about the resonance of your own heart beating? Did you know that just by shifting your attention in those moments, you caused a power surge and voltage flux of electricity in millions of brain cells right inside you own head. By choosing to modify you're awareness, you changed your brain. Not only did you change how your brain was working moments before, but you changed how it will work in the next moment and possibly for the rest of your life.

As you return to reading these words on this page and you pay attention to the next sentence, you set off a cascade of different impulses in a completely different part of your head. In your own brain, blood flow was altered to different areas; electrical currents were rerouted and modified. On a microscopic level a multitude of different nerve cells ganged up chemically to hold hands and communicate in order to establish stronger long-term relationships with each other. As a result of your shift in attention, the dancing shimmering three-dimensional webs of intricate neurological tissue are firing off in new combinations and sequences by your own freewill. You did that by a changing your focus. You changed your mind.

As human beings, we have the natural ability to place our awareness on anything. Where we

place our attention, what we place our attention on and for how long, ultimately defines us on a neurological level. If our awareness is so mobile, then why is it so hard to keep our attention on thoughts that might serve us? Right now, as you continue to concentrate and read this page, you might have forgotten about the pain in your back, the disagreement you had with your boss earlier today, and even what gender you are. It is where we place our attention and what we place our attention on that maps the course of our very state of being.

For example, we can in any given moment, think about a past bitter memory that really is only tattooed in our intimidate folds of our gray matter and like magic, it comes to life. We also have the privilege of attending to future anxieties and worries that do not readily exist except conjured up by our wit but to us, they are real. Our attention brings everything to life and makes real what was essentially unnoticed or unreal. Believe it or not, according to neuroscience placing our attention on pain in the body makes pain exist because the circuits that perceive pain in the brain become electrically activated. By putting our awareness on something else other than pain, the brain circuits that process pain and bodily sensations can and will be literally turned off and presto, the pain goes away. But when we look to see if the pain is gone for good, the corresponding brain circuits once again become activated and as they continuously fire, their connections become more permanently strengthened. By paying attention to pain on a daily basis, we are wiring ourselves neurologically to develop a more acute awareness of pain perception because the related brain circuits become more enriched. Our own personal attention has that much of an effect on us. This could be one solution to how pain or our even past memories characterize us. What we repeatedly think about and what we focus our attention on is what we neurologically become. Neuroscience has finally understood that we can mold and shape the neurological framework of self by the repeated attention we give to any one thing.

Everything that makes us up, the "you" and the "me"–our thoughts, our dreams, our memories, our hopes, our feelings, our secret fantasies, our fears, our skills, our habits, our pains and joys–is etched in the living lattice work of 100 billion brain cells. By the time you have read this far in this article, you will have changed your brain permanently. If you learned even one bit of information, tiny brain cells have made new connections between them and who "you" are is altered. The images that these words created in your mind, will leave footprints in the vast endless fields of neurological landscape that is the identity called "you." For the "you" as a sentient being is immersed and truly exists in the interconnected electrical web of cellular brain tissue. How our nerve cells are specifically arranged by what we learn, what we remember, what we experience, what we envision for ourselves, what we fear, and what we think about ourselves defines us individually and it is reflected in our internal neurological wiring. We are a work in progress.

The organization of brain cells that make up who we are is constantly in flux. Forget the notion that the brain is static, rigid and fixed. Brain cells are constantly and continually remolded and reorganized by our thoughts and experiences. Neurologically, we are repeatedly re-organized by the endless stimuli in our world that we attend to. Instead of imagining nerve cells as hard solid inflexible tiny sticks that are assembled together making up our brain's grey matter, I invite you to see them as dancing patterns of thin electric delicate fibers in an animated web work, connecting and disconnecting all the time. This is much closer to the truth of who "you" are.

The fact that you can read and comprehend the words on this page is due to the many interactions you have had throughout your life. Different people taught you, instructed you and essentially, they changed your brain microscopically. If you accept this notion that your brain is still changing as you read these pages before you than you can easily see that your parents, teachers, friends, family, and culture have contributed to who you are presently. It is our senses that then write the story of who we are on the tablets of our mind through our diverse experiences. Our

mastery is being the fine conductor of this remarkable orchestra of the brain and the mind and, as you have just proven, you can direct the affairs of mental activity.

Now, let's go a little further. I want you to change your brain more. I want to teach you to learn a new activity or skill. Here are the instructions: Look at you right hand. Now with your right hand, touch your thumb to your pinkie finger, then touch your thumb to your index finger; next touch your thumb to your ring finger, then thumb to middle finger. Repeat the process until you can do it automatically. Now do it faster and make your fingers more rapidly move without mistake. As you can see, within a few minutes of paying attention, you mastered the action. In order to learn the movements well, you had to rise out of your resting state from relaxing and reading to a heightened state of conscious awareness. Voluntarily you perked up your brain a little and increased your level of awareness by your intentional freewill. In order for you to have succeeded in memorizing this skill, you had to increase your brain's level of energy. You turned up the dimmer switch to the light bulb in your brain that is constantly on, and it got brighter. You became motivated and your choice to do some "thing" made you brain turn on.

Learning and performing the activity allowed you to amplify your level of awareness by increasing more blood flow and electrical activity to different areas in your brain so that you could stay more present to what you were doing. "You" forced your brain to not wander away to any other thought so you could learn a new action, and that process takes energy. "You" changed the way the arrangement of millions of brain cells fired in diverse patterns. The intentional act took will, focus, and attention. The end result is that "you" are once again, neurologically changed by not only thinking a thought but by demonstrating an action or a new skill.

Now close your eyes. This time, instead of physically demonstrating the finger exercise that I just taught you, I want you to practice doing that same action in your mind. That is, mentally touch each finger the way I asked you to earlier–thumb to pinkie finger, thumb to index finger, thumb to ring finger, and thumb to middle finger. The difference this instant is to mentally rehearse the activity without physically doing it. Do it a few times in your mind and then open your eyes.

Did you notice that while you were practicing in your mind, your brain seemed to image the entire sequence just as you actually did it? Did you also know that if you paid full attention to what you were rehearsing in your mind's eye by maintaining you're attention level on mentally practicing those finger actions, you fired the same set of nerve cells in the same part of your brain as if you were actually doing it? In other words, your brain did not know the difference between you doing the action or you remembering how to do the action. The act of mental rehearsal is a powerful way we can grow and mold new circuits in our brain. Recent studies in neuroscience have shown we can change our brain just by thinking. The question lies here: What exactly do "you" spend most of your time mentally rehearsing, thinking about and finally demonstrating? Be it the conscious or unconscious fabrication of your thoughts and actions, you are always affirming and reaffirming your neurological self as "you". According to neuroscience, bare in mind that whatever you mentally attend to, without any doubt it is what you are and what you will become.