

## **Emotions**

We've covered a lot in this Toss the Toxins course, and we have learned how exposure to harmful chemicals in products we use and the food we eat can impact our thinking. Many people with anxiety disorders, depression, short fuses and anger issues, irritability, and bad behavior spontaneously lose these conditions after tossing the toxins!

Removing these harmful chemicals from our products and food often clears the way for us to address our true thoughts and emotional patterns. Our thoughts, whether positive or negative, send energetic messages to every cell in the body. If we are filled with unresolved and stored emotions like feelings of hopelessness, bitterness, anger, resentment, shame, guilt, fear, self hatred and other toxic emotions - they can contribute to or even be the reason for illness. Stress from toxic thinking or unresolved trauma in our past can be the most harmful toxin we face – even worse than chemical exposure.

According to many researchers, our physical health is a direct result of our thought life.

Studies show that fear alone can trigger over 1,000 known physical and chemical responses in our bodies, activating more than thirty different stress hormones. A change in perspective can automatically improve blood quality, boost immune function, improve digestion, alter gene expression, and more.

And while it's not as easy as simply putting things in a box, I've seen in my own life, my son's life, and in many others' how a shift in perspective and addressing toxic thinking make all the difference like removing toxic chemicals.

When someone contacts me for consultation, they typically have seen lots of doctors yet still have unresolved chronic health issues. Many of them have lost hope, have been on medications for years, are not getting better, have been told they will never fully recover, and are lost in a deep well of survival exhaustion.

My first goal is always to understand what perspective they are coming from. How do they feel about their current situation? Having a deep sense that there is a path forward no matter how bad the situation, is so important. Understanding that right now is a time of great opportunity to take a NEW path, can ignite the healing process!

Just a thought shift from despair and feeling helpless to thoughts of hope and determination removes a great burden of stress, and is as healing as tossing harmful products from your home. BUT let's face it, if we toss every toxic product in our home and we are stressed about it, we are so upset about our attachment to certain products, and underneath we maybe don't want to do it are we really doing ourselves a service?

Perspective on any topic is based on an understanding of the available information pertaining to that subject. Our point of view is essential! What I am saying is, that if I have a client that is full of fear or stress and one that is acting from a position of strength – there will be a difference in results. What is our end up goal? We have to recognize fear based reactions and transform them to a proactive power base so that we are motivated to take action that liberates!

When we focus our mindset on our healing opportunity, we can see a healthy way forward.

In the case of my son, mental attitude and perspective was a critical part of his recovery. Life as he knew it - filled with friends, family, sports, school, etc. - was stripped from him. He had to be isolated from the world. We were told his brain and immune system were so damaged that he no longer had the ability to detoxify the chemicals we are all exposed to everyday. We were to create a safe room for him with as little in it as possible so he wouldn't react. He was described and labeled by the doctors as a "bubble boy."

So here, my energetic, athletic, social, little ten-year-old boy was all by himself everyday except for mom and dad. With no end in sight according to his prognosis, it was Covid quarantine on steroids. Not surprisingly, he became very depressed.

In fact, I saw that his depression was as big an issue as chemical exposure. My husband and I never entertained the idea that he might not recover and that was the constant message we tried to give him - encouragement that God would guide us through and there is a way out. But at age 14, four years into the battle, he hit bottom and to climb out I knew he had to take on his own positive mental and spiritual perspective and make them his own. It was a defining moment when he latched on to that confidence in God that he actually would recover!

No matter what the health concern is that someone may face, having hope and releasing and replacing toxic thinking is foundational to the healing process. Unfortunately, the phrase "it's all in your head" has been insensitively tossed around for decades making many people understandably resistant to the concept of emotions and thoughts contributing to their physical symptoms. Thankfully, that is starting to change, but we must remember to be sensitive with others and sensitive with ourselves, as again, these emotions and experiences are core to us and carry a lot of weight.

So let's talk about some ways to help detoxify our minds!

First, we have to identify toxic thoughts. Fear, worry, anxiety, anger, bitterness, negative outlook, envy, jealousy, despair, hopelessness, etc. Negative emotions are toxic thoughts. It's critical to address the "why" behind any negative thoughts. These feelings need to be dealt with and not buried. That process takes the stress off.

We need to check our thought pantry - are we storing painful memories that we keep bringing out and reviewing? This can lead to depression and keeps us living in the past. If we worry, this keeps us living in the future. We have to make a conscious choice that now is the time to start living in the present.

A few concrete and doable suggestions for ways to detoxify the mind and work through these past emotions include expressive writing, expressive drawing, relaxation practices, and filling the mind daily with the positive counter thoughts to whatever the negative thought cycles might be.

One of the tools that has been very helpful to many of my clients is the concept of writing as a means of expression and healing.

Expressive Writing, Dr. James Pennebaker, PhD of the University of Texas developed a life changing expressive writing tool where you spend 10 - 20 minutes each day journaling in a way that helps release stored unexpressed emotions. Studies show that just 4 days of expressive writing lowers blood pressure, reduces depression, improves sleep, reduces anxiety, increases killer cell activity, improves working memory capacity, and improves mood. Higher immune function was shown to hold for six weeks after the study. This is a tool for health maintenance and prevention as well as an aid in healing when there's disease - or dis-ease - in the body. It doesn't take much time, has no cost, and can provide a powerful health effect.

Dr. Caroline Leaf has written a series of books that provide a prescription for better health and wholeness through healthy thinking patterns. She shares about the "switch" in our brains that enables us to reap the benefits of a detoxed thought life, and offers practical steps to take control of our thoughts. These books are excellent!

Another very powerful technique described in the book, *The Relaxation Response*, a book by Dr. Herbert Benson, describes a 10 - 20 minute technique that promotes the release of long-held stress by fasting from thought. The process facilitates the body going into a deep relaxation state - the opposite of the sympathetic nervous system fight or flight mode. The release of unconscious tension and stress puts the body into the parasympathetic mode of rest and digest, freeing you to expend energy towards healing.

I had a client that had tossed the toxins in her home and diet, but was still having digestive issues. She was very stressed in general, had trauma in her childhood, and had a high pressure job. I suggested she do expressive writing and the relaxation response. She said she didn't have time for that kind of thing. About a year later she contacted me again after seeing a couple of gastroenterologists. She was getting worse and was taking a boatload of supplements that contained gut-disrupting chemicals. I asked her if she would be willing to stop the supplements that had harmful ingredients, do expressive writing for at least 4 days and try the relaxation response before breakfast and dinner. We talked about how when you are stressed, digestion shuts down and that doing the relaxation response would put her into the parasympathetic mode of rest and digest. She said she was desperate, she didn't have the time, but she would try for a month to see if it would help. By the end of the month, she had seen enough

improvement that she continued. After four months, her diarrhea, pain, and most of her symptoms were completely gone. She told me she felt like she had a new life! She was more optimistic, felt like she had more time, and more capacity to deal with the pressures in her life.

There are many ways to toss the toxins of negative thoughts and emotions. It's a very personal journey. You can find several additional tools to retrain the brain and heal from trauma in the resources section of this video. We encourage you to challenge yourself in this area while also being patient with yourself. Because again, this isn't as easy as tossing items in a box and getting rid of them for good in one day. It may take time and be ongoing, but it has the potential to change everything for the better.