

Developing Clarity of Mind and Vision

by Rosemary Wilkie

Rosemary was a healer and therapist for twenty years, taught at the School of Heart Awakening in Arizona, and served as a trustee of Sundial House. She now writes books for children.

Why is it so difficult to change our thoughts? Sometimes they spin round in our minds as though they owned us, and until we learn to master them, they do! The thoughts we hold tend to direct and shape our lives when we identify with them and that is why it is important that we concentrate only on those thoughts which are good, true and beautiful. Most of us have grown up believing that we are our thoughts, but I would suggest that we are more than our thoughts, although it is true that what we think says something about who we are. We seldom stop to consider where "our" thoughts come from.

Our way of thinking in this lifetime arises from the environment into which we are born, and develops as we outgrow, rebel against or are thrust out of it, or when other influences, most particularly our spiritual life, come to bear.

In the 18th century, our society began to value reason, and we all benefit from the enormous changes this brought about. The downside has been not only the separation of science from religion, but a readiness to criticise and judge those who think differently - and who in return feel challenged and defend their point of view vigorously!

Our environment faithfully mirrors our inner life - what we think and feel - who we are. For most of us it takes years to understand and accept this and start to change the only thing that is really in our power to change: ourselves.

Mastering our emotions

As a reader of New Vision you probably know about mastering your emotions. Until we have made some progress with this, like soap opera characters we identify

with our feelings and allow them to control us, using our lower minds to rationalise or justify actions taken for emotional reasons. Mastery means continuing to feel our emotions, but being sufficiently detached and objective not to be governed by them.

In the same way we have to use the mind correctly as a tool. Our higher or abstract mind is a channel to receive and interpret the impressions our soul sends through intuition. These 'impressions' receive form as ideas which can be used and shared.

So a first step in transmuting our thoughts is to stand back and take a look at them. Where did they come from? Parents, teachers, work, friends, media? Do these ideas really represent who we are now and who we aspire to become? We can then consciously adopt as our own the ideas that are right for us.

Letting go of ideas that are not appropriate may or may not be easy. When we find a self-defeating thought, we should not deny it or affirm the opposite until we have considered very carefully indeed what led us to think like that - to expect failure, to worry about not being liked, to feel victimised or isolated from God. During or after your daily meditation, sit quietly with the negative thought as often as necessary, without judging yourself or others, and let it reveal its hidden depth to you. Its value

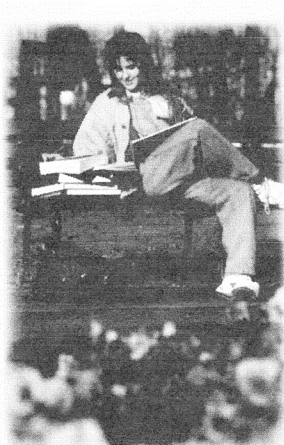
to you. It is probably a defence mechanism, a protective stance, that has enabled you to cope with traumatic or distressing experiences in the past.

Over time, protective walls can become barriers behind which we live our lives. Do we still need that protection? Dismantling it all at once would be scary, but we can open a door here and lower a wall there until we feel safe to move out of that old way of thinking.

Observing yourself as if you were another person brings clarity of mind and vision. So study your behaviour with divine indifference, and every evening review the day. Have you done as you would be done by? Given help, love or prayer to someone in need? How have your actions affected others? Why did we say what we did? Was it kind? Helpful? Sensitive to where that person is? What were your motives?

We don't have to force change

Once we have consciously opted for it, change begins



Let us study our behaviour with divine indifference.

in the higher levels of the mind and comes gradually without pressure, so it is not necessary to force change in your life. Focus on the good things that are happening around you, listen to classical music, look at great paintings, read good books, find time to commune with nature - all will help to create the environment into which positive energies are drawn.

Our western culture glorifies fighting and destroying what we perceive as evil, but perhaps we should look instead to the transformative power of mythology which can reveal the friend behind the seeming foe and the beauty behind apparent evil.

Affirmations are invaluable for reprogramming our brain cells, but if you haven't done them before, I suggest you use the words of a great teacher. The cells take our instructions literally so watch that mischievous lower mind - be sure it isn't encouraging you to affirm something that cannot conceivably be changed, or letting you slip into wishful thinking. The wording should be positive and in the present tense - so that you don't affirm a permanent state of "wanting"!

When we are practised in detaching ourselves from our thoughts, we can redirect our attention to what is emerging, both in our own lives and in the world around us. Positive change is out there wherever you look, in music, films, events, the net, television, magazines.

Our individual efforts may seem puny, but we are all interconnected and the collective power of all those who want positive change in the world is enormous. The future depends on us. If enough of us do all we can to move away from destructive words, thoughts and deeds, we shall reach a critical mass, or tipping point, that will transform our world into the one we dream of and pray for.

Our intent to achieve that is the driving force. ☐