

Episode 44 - CHOOSING YOUR THOUGHTS

I'm Diana Swillinger, and this is the Renew Your Mind podcast. Episode 44 choosing Your Thoughts welcome to the Renew Your Mind podcast. I'm your host, Diana Swillinger. A lot of us, uh, have tried to do the right thing all our lives, but we still feel overwhelmed and stuck. I believe that you deserve to get unstuck and experience more joy, more peace, and more contentment. Regardless of what life sends your way, I'm here to help you renew your mind and make it all possible.

DIANA: Hey. Hey. Hello, everybody. How are you doing today? Hopefully you're doing amazing. So I am going to jump right in you all and tell you about choosing thoughts. Are you ready? Let's get into it. I'm really excited to do this one because it's stemming from my most used coaching tool, the Mind Shift Tool, and it helps in any situation. No matter what's going on in your life, you get to think about three main things what you think, what you feel, and what you do. And we look at all of those in the Mind Shift Tool. I talked about it in an earlier episode. I think it was episode ten. If you want to know more about the Mind Shift Tool or the complete idea, go back and listen to that episode. It's a good one to listen to before today. But specifically today, I'm going to talk about being intentional with the thoughts you choose. Like, you don't have to just automatically accept whatever thoughts come your way. You get to pick, which is super fun. As we know from modern psychology, the cognitive behavioral therapy model shows us it's a cycle. First there's your thoughts, then those determine your feelings, and then your behavior is going to be determined from your feelings.

So if you want to change how you feel, you get to start with your thoughts. If you want to show up better and change your behaviors or your actions or, uh, the things you're doing in life, you still have to start with your thoughts. And this skill is going to really help you. We can't just change a thought that seems negative to be a positive one, and everything's going to be fine. And we can't just pick the opposite thought of whatever we're thinking and expect that's going to work. I don't think it ever really works, at least not in my experience. I have not found it to work. Maybe for a short run, maybe if you white knuckle it and try to believe it really hard, it'll work for a little while, but it's not going to last if you don't believe the thoughts that you're choosing. There's an example that I use all the time because I speak at a lot of women's groups for moms, and last week I was speaking online for a mom's preschoolers gathering, and it's a thought that comes up all the time. The thought is, I'm a bad mom. I used to think it all the time. The opposite thought of that is, I'm a good mom, or I'm a great mom, but it doesn't work. Here's why. If you notice that thought that you've been thinking you're a bad mom, actually, even before you noticed that thought, your brain was hard at work looking for evidence to show you that that thought is true, your M brain starts scanning for everything it can find support that that thought is true. It's going to notice when you're behind on laundry. It's going to notice when you make craft mac and cheese and no vegetables and serve that for dinner. It's going to notice when you tell your kids that you're too busy to play.

It notices when you lose your patience and you snap at your kids. Now we've got that thought. I'm a bad mom. And all the evidence that your brain has stacked up to prove it's true, to enforce

your belief that you're a bad mom, if you try to just slap on, I'm a good mom and just start saying or thinking that I'm a good mom, it doesn't work. Because in the back of your brain, your brain is saying, hang on there. I hear you saying, you're a good mom, but remember the laundry. Remember snapping at the kids. Remember the mac and cheese dinner. You didn't even wash the pot after you made the mac and cheese. You left it in the sink for two days. All the evidence your brain's remembered. And it's not that your brain's out to get you. It's just doing its job. You gave it a thought, I'm a bad mom. And it's like, all right, got it. This is the thought she believes. Evidence coming your way. It's your brain's way of trying to support you. The problem is, you just gave it a terrible thought.

So, yes, I do want you to think you're a good mom, but you can't just go there immediately or whatever your thought is. Okay? I'm just using this one as an example. I do want you to think the good thing about yourself, but you might not be ready to get there yet. That's okay. Uh, but because of that, I have found the most effective way. Instead of thinking a new thought that's going to require the brain to go to work and build evidence and totally shift everything that it's been believing, instead of doing that, it is so much easier to shift a thought to a different thought that you already believe. For me, with the thought, I think I'm a bad mom, I get to start examining my thoughts about being a mom. Different from that, thoughts that I already think and believe. So some thoughts that are true for me, even while I think I'm a bad mom, I'm also thinking, I love my kids. I always love my kids. I feed my kids. I take care of my kids needs in addition to feeding them. I make sure they're clean. I take them to school. If my kids come to me for help, I help them. I'm there for my kids. Some things I'm not sure how to do as a mom. There's always new stuff, but I'm the kind of mom that figures things out. All of those thoughts are thoughts that I think and believe, in addition to sometimes believing I'm a bad mom. And, yeah, some of those thoughts that I believe, maybe we'd even want to work on them a little bit. There's still some room in some of those where there's some doubt that I'm doing enough. So I don't want to accidentally pick a thought that's still planting some doubt about my worth or my adequacy.

So I'm going to start with the thought, I love my kids. I really can't put myself down for that. I can't feel terrible about that one. And it's true. There's no disputing it. I totally believe it. Now, thinking I'm a bad mom, how do you think that makes me feel? How would it make you feel? When I think I'm a bad mom, it makes me feel inadequate, and that feels terrible. I don't like feeling inadequate. I don't have to think that thought. I'm a bad mom. I've got a plan now, I've checked in on what some of my other thoughts are, and I can change it to a different thought. When that thought comes up, and it doesn't for me usually anymore, it does occasionally, now that I think about it. But I've done really well with thinking different thoughts, so it doesn't come up for me that often because I'm used to my new thoughts. But when it does come up, or if I notice I'm feeling inadequate, I get to think a thought on purpose, the thought that I chose, I love my kids, and that makes me feel love. Why not feel love instead of inadequate, right? If I still need some help feeling the love, in addition to saying, I love my kids, I can just go through and start naming them one by one. I love Shailey. I love John. I love Eddie. I love Thomas. I love my kids. I get to feel love then instead of inadequate. And love is an emotion I like to feel. This Christmas, a couple of days before Christmas, actually, the night of December 23, I was in my

bedroom with a box of wrapping paper, scotch tape, scissors, ribbons. You know what was going down, right? It was present wrapping time, and I had at least 25 things to wrap. When I started wrapping, I noticed I was huffing and I was feeling some mild anxiety, like tightness in my chest. I was feeling frustration, which, by the way, is what we call a lot of different emotions if we're not sure what emotion it was. And I wasn't even sure. I just knew I was feeling frustration. Maybe I was feeling some resentment, like, why am I the one who has to do this. And I had lots of thoughts that were spinning in my head, but the main one that kept popping up over and over was, I hate wrapping presents.

Like, if I wasn't paying attention, if I just kept looking at my list of who the presents for, who am I going to put on the name tag when I wrap it? And I kept huffing along the way, and I thought I was paying attention to wrapping my presents, but I didn't stop and notice what other thoughts were spinning in my head. I might have missed it, but I was like, hey, I'm huffing and I'm acting a little frustrated here. What thoughts going on in there? So I was paying attention. I hate wrapping presents. Kept thinking, uh, it no wonder I was feeling anxious. I was going to be in my room for a couple hours feeling icky the whole time. With a thought like that, I'm like, it's Christmas. I don't want to feel icky. So I'm, um like, let's think about this. I can try to tell myself that I like rapping, but I know that won't work. So I asked myself, is there anything I like here? Well, I like that we have all these presents for the family, but I immediately went in my brain to but I still hate wrapping them. That wasn't going to get me there. I'm like, all right, let's dig a little deeper. Why am I even doing this? If I hate wrapping presents, why am I doing this? Well, I'm doing this because I love Christmas. And specifically, I like Christmas morning around the tree. We each take turns opening up a present. It lasts for a couple hours because we take our time and we drink coffee and laugh and we give and we receive and we take pictures and the Christmas music's on. I love that. It's one of my favorite things to do. After thinking about that, I was like, oh, uh, I got it. I have a new thought. It's a little long, but here it is. I love Christmas morning around the tree where we all take turns opening gifts, and this is how we make that happen. All of that was true. It didn't even matter if I like Wrapping or not. Who cares? That became totally irrelevant.

I love Christmas morning around the tree where we all take turns opening gifts, and this is how we make that happen. When I thought, I hate rapping, I felt anxious. But this new thought this new thought had me feeling well. I felt confident. That's true. I felt well, I was imagining feeling joyful, but not quite yet. I wasn't feeling it yet. So that was going to be on Christmas, I think I was feeling eager. Is eager an emotion any of you would pick to feel? I don't think I've ever chosen to feel eager on purpose. And I didn't even notice what emotion I was feeling when I was when I made this shift. I just knew it was a whole lot better. And I felt inspired, I guess. Maybe inspired another one. But I felt eager, which is kind of like enthusiastic, but not quite there yet. Either way, eager feels a lot better than anxious. I got to wrapping presents, and, uh, experience was fine. I don't think I loved it or hated. I didn't have to love it. I didn't have to feel good about it. But I didn't have to hate it either. I just did it, and I felt eager. That was pretty cool. So I want to give you a bunch of examples on changing a thought. I just gave you those two. These are all from real life situations where I've worked with women on their thoughts. Okay? So I'm not going to tell you the whole scenarios, but you can kind of imagine the scenarios. I'm going to tell you the

thought that they came to me with and the feeling it produced. And then we're going to look at the new thought that after coaching them for 1530 minutes, we came to the new thought and how it made them feel. Okay. Remember, the new thought only worked for each person that got their new thought. It only worked for them when they were ready to believe the new thought, or they already believed the new thought. All right, first one. The thought he's turning his back on me. The feeling rejected. The new thought for this client. He's in pain, too, and he's doing the best he can. And then she felt compassion.

Next thought I have to invest so much time in her feeling insufficient. The new thought it's not up to me to make sure her life doesn't fall apart. And the new feeling was secure. Notice in these situations, like, I'm not telling you the situation that was going on in my clients lives, it doesn't matter because the situation did not change in any of these circumstances. Only the thoughts changed. Next thought about someone at their job. They think, I can't handle it. Feeling defeated. The new thought had nothing to do with what other people thought, by the way. The new thought I follow through with what I say I'll do. And the feeling confident. The next thought from a mom. I, um, let my daughter down. M feeling inadequate. The new thought this is interesting. It's very different. I didn't expect this, but I can figure it out. And that new feeling capable. All right, one more. This could be about anything. I didn't write down the situation, so I don't remember what this one was, but I think we've all had this thought it's too much. In this case, my client felt discouraged. The other emotion that's very popular with the thought, it's too much. A lot of people feel overwhelmed. The new thought you've got to make sure you're ready to believe it. I can do the next thing. Not, I can do all the things or I can handle it all or I'll figure it out. If you feel like it's too much, break it down to one thing, one thought, I can do the next thing. She didn't even think beyond that and she felt hopeful. You take different action, by the way. If you think it's too much and you feel discouraged, you're going to have a lot of inaction, you're going to have a lot of hiding, you're going to have a lot of procrastinating. But if you think I can do the next thing and you feel hopeful, guess what you do? You go do the next thing. What we think matters.

Every thought matters. Your brain is going to go to work to prove your thoughts true by gathering evidence. And it's going to find it there's evidence for whatever you decide to think. You can think terrible things that make you feel terrible. Your brain will find evidence to prove it's true. You can feel things that bring hope and confidence and security and compassion and love. You can think those thoughts. Instead, spend more time on those and your brain is going to go find evidence to prove those true. You might as well choose thoughts that are going to bring the positive emotions and emotions that drive you into behaviors and actions that let you show up in your life the way you want to for yourself and for other people. You get to think whatever you want. You have free will in your brain. You're the director of your brain and you can pick thoughts that bring the emotions you want. And when you feel better, your behavior will follow and you'll show up better for you, and you'll show up better for the people in your life. It is all connected. Speaking of changing thoughts, just want to let you know this month's free Live Webinar class is on how to stop toxic thoughts because some of these thoughts get stuck in there pretty tight and are super hard to let go of. I do get that. So I want to do it at a class because if you are able to show up for the class, I'll help you identify, I'll help you right there and

then if you need it too, I'll help you identify what thought in your situation is toxic and is sabotaging you from what you want. And together we'll work on finding a better thought, a truer thought, a thought that serves you instead of sabotaging you. If that sounds interesting to you, you should totally come. It's going to be in a couple of weeks. But uh, I think you should sign up now because there is only room for 100 people in the webinars. And I'm expecting that the enrollment for this one, it's going to be popular one, it's going to get close to that hundred. So if you want to make sure you get a spot. Go reserve it now at rympodcast.com just scroll down, find the link for free monthly webinars, and just, uh, put in your first name and an email. I don't even need the name of your firstborn child. It's totally fine. No, I just want to be able to send you an email with the link to join the meeting because you have to have the link to get in. So that's all I need. So go on over to Rympodcast.com and sign up. All right, y'all, that's what I have for this week. So I will catch you next week, except that I'm going to put out a bonus episode in a couple of days. So I guess I'll catch you at the bonus episode. Until then, take care of you.

As an advanced, certified life coach, I help Christian women trying to live their best lives, but they still feel unsatisfied and stuck. I teach thought management skills that work so you can enjoy life again and step into who God has created you to be. Don't forget to head on over to Rympodcast.com to get my free resources or a free coaching call.