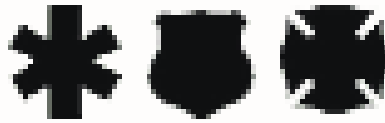


AFTER THE CALL



It is no secret that we change over year. We are noticeably taller, heavier, and our voices are different than when we were younger. We know as well that our brain changes. We can agree with that statement, but how are you different from last week? What about a week before that? Unless something drastic has occurred, it is hard to suggest what might be different.

Through the years we have been gently guided into certain ways to “think”. Some of these are beneficial. In fact they save our brainpower for other things (think about the last time you were driving and then suddenly realized you had covered a few kilometers...). But, other times they can be limiting.

In order to *Think Differently* you need to be able to identify barriers to thinking:

1. Take it or Leave it : “It’s black and white to me”

This type of thinking reflects our inability to live in “the greys” of life. We know, for instance, that not everything is so cut and dry. Try and remember the last time you decided that you had no ability to compromise with your thinking.

2. Patterning : “ You always get what you want”

Sometimes we find ourselves deciding upon a pattern of behavior based on one outcome. They were late for their appointment turns into “they are always late”. Mark Twain once wrote, “Give a man a reputation of being an early riser, and he can sleep in ‘til noon”. We like to generalize, so be careful around using “always” and “never” especially to describe ourselves or others.

3. The Should Show : “I should have tried harder”

Criticism is difficult for us to turn off. We are being told to perform better and be more efficient constantly. But, mind yourself when you realize you are using words like “should” and “must”. After all, are you a mind-reader? I should statements, more often than not, come after we’ve acquired a bit more information. Moreover, if we start telling others what they “should” do, we will tend to find ourselves frustrated and disappointed.

4. Leading with Emotions: “I think I’m right but I feel embarrassed... so I must be wrong”

Generally, we tend to think of emotions as good and as bad. Emotions are neutral! We like to think that if we “feel” a certain way, then we must be that way. If we feel dumb, we resort to thinking that we are dumb. These are two very different things.

There are a lot of other barriers to thinking that we can fall prey to. These are only a few of the more prevalent ones. Remember, that identifying these types of thinking does not mean you are suffering from anything at all. In fact, everyone engages in these types of thinking patterns. Identifying that we are using these, however, helps us to remain calm and realistic in times of stress and hardship!