

Your Conditioned Mind

The way to tame an elephant is to tie a piece of rope around its leg when it is a baby. As it attempts to move away the rope pulls tight and the elephant can move no further, it soon realises how far it can travel away from the master and learns to stay within that boundary.

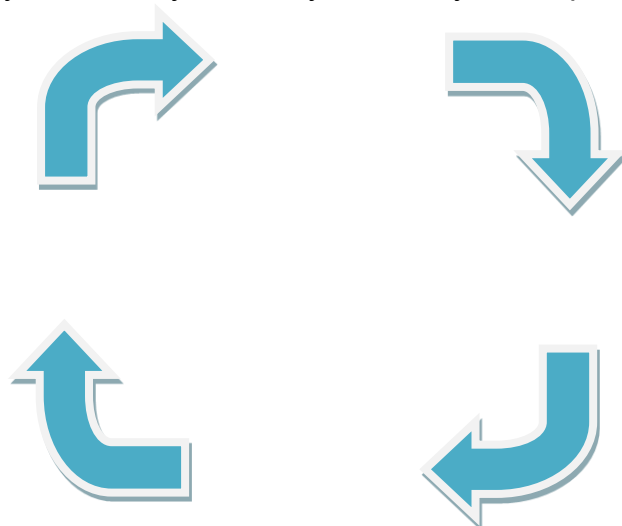
When the elephant becomes full grown and the rope is taken away, the elephant will still not move outside of the range that the rope used to restrict him to. In other words the elephant has been programmed to believe that if he goes a certain distance away from his master, he will be stopped.

This tells us something about not only the way elephants act, but also how we ourselves can allow our beliefs to shape our actions.

This programming happens to all of us at an early age. If you're constantly told as a child that you should keep your voice down as you can't sing, the likelihood of you becoming a professional singer as an adult are limited. Similarly, if you are encouraged and nurtured and told what a bright little child you are, what do you think the likely results would be?

Of course we can't lay the blame squarely with our parents, there are many other influences on us throughout our life and perhaps the biggest culprit for programming our mind is a little closer than we might care to admit.

We all have a running dialogue in our mind and will create stories and thoughts around every situation. If we fail at something more than once we can often allow this dialogue to take control and begin to develop a mindset of negativity. Henry Ford once famously said, "If you think you can, or you think you can't, you are probably right."



Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

Of course we all have thoughts. Everything you have done from birth to this moment is based on a thought. Everything you say requires a thought. The ways people react to us, interact with us and talk to us create thoughts.

These thoughts are what control us and affect the way we feel. You see, feelings are just a series of thoughts, which are processed and develop into feelings. Over time these feelings create your belief system, which includes your feelings about 'who you are' and 'what your place is in the world'. These feelings can manifest themselves positively or negatively depending on the thoughts that shaped them.

Our feelings and beliefs are what determine our actions. We tend to act consistently with the beliefs that we have developed over time. This happens whether the feeling or belief is true or not. We often refer to our actions as behaviour. For instance, because I believe this or feel this way, then I must behave in a way that supports that belief. Of course these actions will determine your results.

Because you act in a certain way you produce the results that you do. These results are what we also call experiences. Over time we build up a series of experiences, these experiences are then processed and developed into new thoughts...and so the cycle is complete. Thoughts literally shape and create our experience of life – they can be your greatest friend or your worst enemy.

For example:

Think – A person that falls off a bike begins to think that this may happen again.

Feel – They begin to feel that they do not have the skills required to ride a bike and that it is dangerous.

Actions – When they do ride a bike they are very nervous and unstable.

Results – As they are so unstable they fall off the bike again, which supports their original thought process.

As you can see, this process can be positive and also very destructive. Where we have built up a strong mindset around a topic the process can be very difficult to break down and change. Either way it is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

If you want to develop your own freedom and personal responsibility for your life then you have to make a conscious decision to do so.

Your Freedom and Responsibility

In other words, when you are confronted by an issue you have the option to immediately respond according to your ingrained subconscious thoughts and beliefs or you can make a choice and then respond. This moment of reflection or 'gap' is where your freedom exists. You have to choose to 'live in the gap' and allow your conscious mind take control for a moment.



Exercise:

Consider a situation where your beliefs about yourself have shaped the results you ended up with. Transfer your thoughts to the table below.

Event:	
Thoughts:	
Feelings:	
Actions:	
Results:	
Positive Alternative Choice:	

