

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF BEING STILL

Using the Power of Silence for Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Health and Healing.



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Scripture taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

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The foundation and lowest common denominator of our human existence is our thoughts, they alone have almost absolute power and dominion over our lives.

**For Hans Olsen, my teacher.
and John Methusula, his teacher
and John's teacher who dwelt in a cave in the Himalayas.
Without them this work would not exist!**

Most of us are completely unaware of the almost absolute power and influence that our thoughts have in our lives.

Foreword

The other day, my wife and I were walking to our car after grocery shopping, There was a guy just sitting in his car next to ours and as we approached he got out of his car and came towards us. I had no idea what he could have wanted but it was obvious he was waiting there for us or me actually. He said, “you probably don’t remember me but I was in your Being Still class at the VA a couple months ago. I just wanted to thank you again for what you taught me”. He went on to explain how much better he felt and how much better his life is now and how much he had to look forward to. He thanked me again and left. My wife commented that he looked very happy and healthy. I would have to say he looked like he finally had it back together.

For many years I have been teaching a class I call “Stop the Thoughts” at the VA Hospital in Battle Creek, Michigan. The class has also been called Being Still. I changed the name a while back because of a universal thought that everyone has when dealing with depression. That universal thought that many of us have goes something like, “if I could just stop these thoughts, everything would be fine”. That thought is true and reason and intelligence tells us that it is. The roots and cause of depression is in our conscious thoughts and not in the subconscious or unconscious as many teach and believe. I will dispell that theory in this book. Another reason that I changed the name is because some thought the class to be just another method of meditation, which it is not. The difference between the Being Still exercise and meditation makes all of the difference in healing.

It only takes me a few minutes to teach someone how to be still. During the other forty or so minutes I explain why and how the Being Still mental exercise is so effective in stopping those obtrusive thoughts. I teach some things that are very obvious, yet they are either missed, ignored or outright denied in the conventional paths of treatment. I watch heads nod as I ask them how they can expect those depressive thoughts to go away if they keep thinking and talking about them all of the time. I tell them why their depressive thoughts are sometimes worse after therapy. I then explain why they will never think, talk, therapy,

medicate or meditate their way out of depression. Most of what I teach is diametrically opposite to the way psychology and science thinks and teaches. After explaining what is really going on in their head, it becomes easy to explain why Being Still will be so effective in helping them free themselves from their misery.

This little book explains in a comprehensive and definitive way all that most people with depression, PTSD and many of the other maladies associated with depression needs to know and understand. Depression and all of the maladies that stem from it including PTSD and substance abuse are some of the worst wounds that we can bare.

It is important to understand that all of those conditions are rooted in depression and depression is rooted in our thoughts, our conscious, moment to moment, everyday thoughts!

I can't believe it was that simple.

A Vietnam Veteran

(Two weeks after he was taught how to be still and after more than 40
years of suffering from PTSD)

Here is a practical example;

Thoughts become intrusive in the same way a fantasy that you have thought a lot about does.

Remember how the fantasy just wouldn't go away when you decide to stop thinking it.

Remember how you had to avoid thinking about the fantasy for it to go away?

This book explains why that fantasy wouldn't go away.
It also explains how intrusive thoughts act in the same way as
fantasy thoughts.

LET US REASON TOGETHER FOR A MOMENT

Let's set aside our belief that the conventional and time honored ways of working it out through thinking and talking about it can actually work.

Have you ever wondered what would have happened to you if you had spent as much time thinking and talking about some goals you had set for yourself, instead of spending all of that time with your depressive thoughts?

Instead of being more depressed wouldn't you be happy, rich, beautiful, smart, strong and have a romantic relationship with the most beautiful person imaginable!

Seriously, why should we expect that thinking and talking about either of the two, our goals or our depressive thoughts, would have any other effect then intensifying and manifesting them?

You really are what you think and you and the life you are living is becoming what you think about most, and it follows that you certainly are creating your own heaven or hell, happiness or misery in and through the thoughts that you spend your day thinking.

Depression and many of the conditions associated with it, or caused by it, are not so much psychological issues as they are thought issues.

How many times have you said to yourself?

“If I could just stop these thoughts, everything would be fine.”

You should instinctively know in your heart and mind that that thought is true and reason tells you that it is true.

The bases or root of depression and the maladies associated with it is in your conscious thoughts.

For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he:

Proverbs 23:7 King James Bible

How we are unconsciously creating the life we are living.

Many of us know that to get where we want to go in life it is vastly important to set goals and work toward them. We need to think often about our goals, write them down, post them and visit them often. Some of us even visualize them; we spend time holding the picture of what we want in our mind. The more effective we are at doing these things the quicker they become manifested in our lives. The thoughts that we think is the way that we all, every single one of us, have created the life that we have.

Whether we are aware of it or not, we and the life we are living and who and what we will become begins within our mind. Every one of our thoughts contributes to who and what we are and who and what we are becoming. Our thoughts become manifested in our lives because that is how we and the life we experience are created. The life we experience is created through our thoughts and through our actions as they are in harmony with our thoughts. Even those who know this are not fully aware of how much influence and power each and every thought has in their lives. Life is all, every bit of it, about and because of the conscious thoughts that we think as much as the things said and the actions we perform. Whether you know it or not does not matter, the reality of life is that you and your thoughts are continuously self-involved in self-creating the life that you are living. If you doubt this, spend some time thinking about it.

This dynamic of the creation of your life from the thoughts you have holds true in every situation, any thoughts you have and especially those thoughts held in mind or continuously visited will manifest themselves in your life. It is only reasonable to realize that in the same way that your goals become manifest because of your constant thinking, talking and visualizing them, the same effect will happen of the thoughts that bring you into depression.

As you allow yourself to continuously think destructive and self-defeating thoughts they will manifest themselves in your life in the same way that goals do. Your life is made out of your thoughts, the structure or material that those thoughts are made of is the same in both instances, and the only difference between thoughts is the content of the thought. While the thoughts containing the goals you desire and think about bring about a degree of wanted results, the negative and self-defeating thoughts you constantly think will bring about their content as well. Depressive thoughts and talking about it will bring depression and all of the destructive effects that come with it, including the eventual development of uncontrollable and intrusive thoughts.

Whether battling depression or seeking the realization of lofty goals, as in any pursuit we aim our thoughts and mind at, our condition is the realization of what we have spent so much of our time thinking about. Our lives are driven primarily by our thoughts, followed by words and actions. As a person with depression spends so much time dwelling on the thoughts that accompany that condition and then is encouraged to talk about it and explore the so called triggers and the other possible subconscious or unconscious causes of it, the condition will only worsen.

Thinking and talking about it, including therapy, has and will only make it worse.

Therapy is a valuable tool in helping people with certain psychological conditions, such as personality disorders or behavior problems and it is effective in helping people to understand themselves better, mending or improving relationships and helping families to interact. But therapy, while may be helpful in the beginning, quickly becomes counterproductive in trying to alleviate the problems with depression.

Taking the former points made here under consideration, it should become increasingly obvious that it is impossible to think or talk your way out of depression. Thinking about it constantly, talking about it with others and therapy not only feeds the thoughts that cause depression but can also have an agitating effect on the mind.

Agitation in the mind is caused primarily by thinking and talking about the thoughts that are involved in or have caused the depression. Depressive thoughts stir emotions and talking about those thoughts intensifies those emotions. They all work together too, as those emotions intensify, the agitation increases and that drives the depressive thoughts to become even more overwhelming. That cycle continues and increases in intensity as you continue thinking or talking about it. All of it feeds the condition, the confusion becomes deeper and the agitation becomes more severe.

These are some of the reasons, but not the only reasons, why continuous thinking and talking will only make the condition worse. There are other dynamics of the mind and thoughts that are involved and they will be explained in this book.

Peace of mind is not found in thoughts, words and concepts. The very definition of peace is no disturbance or conflict. Peace means tranquility, quiet. Peace of mind is beyond thinking and beyond concept; it is a sustained simple quiet and tranquil condition that happens outside of thinking. When the thoughts that you think bring stress into your mind there is never going to be any peace.

It is unreasonable to assume that any method of thinking and talking will ever solve depressive mental conditions because the entire condition is in and because of the thoughts. Therefore the only way to overcome and heal from depression is to stop thinking the thoughts that cause it and sustain it.

Stopping the thoughts method of dealing with the issues relating to depression is diametrically opposite to everything used, taught and thought in psychology. Once considered, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that thinking and talking about your depression could and

would only make it worse. If the problem is in your thoughts, how can you expect that more thinking and talking about it would ever make it go away?

The bases or root of depression and the maladies associated with it is in our conscious thoughts and will continue as we keep thinking and talking about it.

A method of stopping the thoughts is needed. It needs to be understood that stopping to think and talk about the thoughts that have become so overwhelming and intrusive is the key to mental and emotional and spiritual health and healing.

As you think and talk about the thoughts, you are feeding them and making them stronger and more imbedded in your mind.

Refusing to think and talk about the things you have gone over hundreds of times before in your mind and with your words is not suppressing them, it is just a conscious decision to let go of them and refuse to think them anymore.

This book is about learning what is really going on in your mind and thoughts. It is about what really happened to you, how you came to be depressed and what you are doing that continues to feed the overwhelming and intrusive thoughts that you can't stop yourself from thinking. This work explains it all in a comprehensive and reasonable way and in a way that anyone can understand.

Even more importantly it teaches you how to stop thinking the thoughts. How to enable yourself to be able to refuse the thoughts a place in your mind and thought processes. When we are depressed we instinctively know that if we could just stop the thoughts, everything would be fine. That instinct is true and you will come to understand how and why it is true by reading and studying the principles explained in this book. With that knowledge you will come to understand why being still and stopping the thoughts is the process that cures depression.

To make yourself still and stop thinking the thoughts is not suppressing them, it is just a conscious decision to let go of them and refuse to think them anymore.

**“No problem can be solved from the same level
of consciousness that created it.”**

Albert Einstein

**You can't use your thinking and your mind to
figure out or cure what's going on in your
thinking and your mind!**

Doug Zaccanelli

The Counterproductive Results of Continuous Therapy

Therapy is good so far as it is used correctly and is appropriate for the condition that it is treating. Counseling an individual can bring about positive change both socially and psychologically. However, whenever the condition is brought about by depression, there comes a time when you need to stop thinking and talking about it. Whenever you are thinking or talking about the problems of depression or conditions associated with it you are perpetuating them.

Psychoanalysis and therapy have an effect and talking about your issues is helpful to a point, but there comes a point in the healing process when you need to let it go in order to continue healing. If you do not and you continue with thinking and talking about it constantly, you not only continue to perpetuate but even to magnify the problem. How can you expect to continually think and talk about the problem all of the time and expect it to ever go away? As you continue that approach, you will find yourself just drawn deeper into the mire and confusion of mind and the overwhelmingly intrusive and destructive thoughts within it.

Even many good intentioned coping mechanisms become counter-productive. Such as when you are trying to avoid those negative and destructive thoughts by focusing your mind on a different, more positive thought, you are still feeding the same mental condition you are trying to avoid. As you are trying to switch your attention to a positive thought in order to avoid its negative counterpart is still feeding the same fundamental condition because it is all one thing, your mind and your thoughts are all connected. Thinking of some seemingly opposite thing in an effort to change thoughts or behavior is feeding the same primary thing, an out of control mind and the thoughts within it!

When you are trying to be mindful or trying to relax and calm yourself by meditating, going to your “happy place”, visualizing or even doing something like chanting the word ONE or OM, or any of a multitude of other therapies that are contrived and conceptualized by men, including the multitude of psychological therapies rooted in Freudian theory, you

are all of the time using the same mental processes, functions and facilities that the problem is in.

All of these methods continue to feed and sustain the problem. All of these methods may seem to have some effect but they will not solve the underlying problem. Using these methods makes it a certainty that you will eventually find yourself back where you started looking for another coping mechanism.

You can be sure that whenever you are talking or thinking about the problem or doing any one of the things just mentioned in an effort to overcome depression, you are just directing sustaining energy into the root, cause and structure of the problem. How can you expect to overcome your affliction using the same facilities that are afflicted?

**Whether you know it or not or believe it or not
does not matter, the reality is that you are
continuously self-involved in self-creating the
life that you are living through and because of
the thoughts that you think.**

Because it is All Thought

Your own thoughts rule, they are the most influential and powerful thing in your life. Your thoughts are the reason you are who you are and what you have become in life. The overwhelming reason you are where you are in your life is because of the thoughts that you think, moment to moment and day to day.

Whether your thoughts are predominantly good and positive or predominantly destructive and negative, the thoughts that you think rule your present life and are developing the life you will have going forward into your future. Your own thoughts that you think every day and moment to moment are developing and influencing everything in your life and everything in your life experience. Your thoughts are in most ways the only real influence because no matter what happens to you, it is how you perceive and think about it that is the real influence. That seemingly weak and ineffectual thought that is fluttering through your head at this moment in time is a powerful force in building you or damaging you and every single thing going on in your life. It is also the sole reason that you are prosperous or broke, emotionally and psychologically stable or a basket case, a great person to be around or a person to avoid. It is only because of your thoughts that you are happy or miserable. Every single thought you have is another brick in the wall of the life you are building, whether it be a castle or a miserable little shack.

It is all the thoughts that you are thinking day to day and moment to moment that is the entire cause of your condition. Whether that condition is extreme happiness, success, and a life worth living or depression, failure and dissatisfaction of where and what you and your life has become. All of it, everything, depends on your thoughts and it is only your thoughts.

The reality is that it is not some unconscious memory or situation going on far below the surface in what people call your subconscious that is causing your depression or any of the other conditions associated with depression. It is not some unconscious or buried memories or long forgotten thing that you haven't dealt with yet that is

causing the problems either.

Even the things going on around you or happening to you may seem to be the cause of some of the problems you are having, but it is more because of the way that you think about those things that is the major issue. The problem lies in the thoughts you have about those things that affect you more than anything else.

It is very simply the thoughts that you keep thinking every day that continues to exacerbate and escalate the problem. It is not because you got beat up every day in the first grade or you were molested at the age of nine or your mother didn't breast feed you long enough. Many of us have been through serious and overwhelmingly traumatic experiences and still have gone on to a happy and productive life.

You will never think, talk, therapy, meditate, medicate or sleep your depression away!

The overwhelming cause of your depression and misery is the thoughts that you are constantly thinking. It is in those thoughts that you can't let go of, or refuse to let go of, that contain or bring with them the pain and stress you are experiencing. Those are the thoughts you have to let go of and refuse them a place in your mind. Only then will you have relief from that stress and pain.

To move on you must come to the understanding and to know that the thoughts that are passing through your mind right now at this moment in time is the cause of your depression, your unhappiness and every fear and doubt that you have about yourself and what you are experiencing in life. That is the truth of what is going on, that is the reality that you need to understand and accept in order to move on.

To move on you must know that counter to what many practice and believe, you will not change your thoughts or the situation they cause in your life by thinking and talking about them. In fact, the more you think the thoughts or talk about them the worse it will get.

Sanity, mental stability and underlying happiness in life depend almost entirely on your conscious thoughts. All that you aspire to be, all that you seek in life in regards to happiness, peace of mind and emotional stability depends upon your conscious, everyday thoughts. Just as in goal setting, you are in essence, thinking the things that you want into being, your depression or other conditions you experience come about because of the thoughts that you have. In depression you are literally thinking the things that you don't want into being because you can't stop thinking or talking about them.

Your happiness depends upon you having good thoughts that you think without effort, every day, day in and day out. Your happiness depends upon having good, healthy, positive thoughts about yourself, the world around you and your place within it. Healthy thoughts need to dominate your thinking every day in order for you to be happy.

Our happiness depends very little upon our circumstances or the things that are happening to us and around us. We are happy only if we chose to be happy and it is essential to our happiness that we have control of what we allow ourselves to think. Even when "stuff" happens which it inevitably does, we have to control our thinking and what we allow to pass through our mind. We need to be confident in our thoughts and feelings, to know that they are true and real and normal. When the thoughts that we have and our thinking is right, everything else in our life tends to fall into place. That doesn't mean our life

becomes perfect, it just means that we become able to deal confidently with everything life throws at us and still have a degree of happiness and peace of mind in spite of our troubles!

When our thoughts are upon the business of living instead of fighting intrusive thoughts and feelings and wondering what is wrong with us all of the time, then we know that our thinking is healthy and normal and we have our life back.

The power to get control of your thoughts and mind begins with having correct knowledge of what is really going on in your head.

Lunch with a Friend

Some years ago my friend and I were eating lunch together one afternoon. As usual the conversation was light and meaningless because, as usual, we spent most of the time more or less mocking each other, not maliciously but in a spirit of friendship. Then it turned serious. My friend, out of the blue, told me that he had been considering suicide for months now and that he had come to the point where he was going to go ahead and do it.

We are good friends but not necessarily close enough that I really knew what was going on with him in his day to day life, we just got together for lunch now and then to catch up. At first I thought he was about to tell me a punch line but then I began to realize that he was serious.

He started telling me that he had been seeing a therapist but, in spite of therapy and other things he has tried, the intrusiveness and uncontrollability of the thoughts he was having just kept getting worse. He went on about how miserable he was and how he couldn't, or didn't want to deal with it anymore. He had come to the conclusion that he was just going to end it the only way that he knew how. He was choosing the way that too many people end up having to choose.

This was not the first time that I had been surprised by somebody in this way but I was very surprised by him because I knew how very strong and confident he was in everything. His candor, in telling me what was going on with him, may have saved his life. He had no idea that I knew how to deal with this type of problem. That I had, over the years, showed many people how to deal with destructive and intrusive thoughts and to heal themselves from depression.

I asked him if he would hold off on his plans for at least two weeks and do exactly what I told him to do. He thought that I was kidding so I had to tell him that I was serious. I also gave him a promise that if he did what I was about to teach him, not only would he feel better in just a few days, but that within a week or two of steady practice he would come to realize that this practice would enable him to heal himself of his depression. I also promised him that because of what he was about to

learn he would never have to go through depression again.

I began to teach him the things that are talked about in this book.

Knowledge of what is really happening in his head and the little exercise I was going to teach him would give him all of the power that he needed to take back control of his mind and his thoughts and his life. The power to take back control lies in having correct knowledge of what is really going on in your head and then using that knowledge in a practical and effective way. The practical and effective thing to do is to stop thinking the thoughts because it is the thoughts that are the problem. It takes a little practice to be able to stop the thoughts but it becomes possible with the method that is taught here.

Thoughts may become intense and seem to attack at first because you are denying them the attention they need to exist.

My friend agreed to hold off on his plans for a while, of course, and he agreed to listen to what I was about to teach him. And then to practice the mental exercise I was going to show him how to do.

I began teaching him by telling him what was really going on in his head. I started by explaining some basic and simple things about the mind and thoughts. I explained how thoughts and mind interact with each other in the mental processes. How thoughts are presented to our consciousness in the process of thinking. How thoughts are fed, strengthened and perpetuated as we think them and how they can become intrusive and out of control because of it.

I explained to him why he could not overcome his intrusive thoughts by thinking and talking about them. I explained why therapy, drugs, meditation and mindfulness have little to no positive effect. In fact I said that all of these psychological practices and methods only exacerbate problems with depression. We reasoned together that as he continued to talk about and to think the thoughts, that he was in fact feeding them.

I taught him that by practicing a simple little exercise in mental self-discipline that he could learn how to stop thinking those thoughts.

Finally I taught him how to be still and stop his thoughts.

I also cautioned him that the intrusive thoughts may become intense for a day or two because of his denying them his attention. They may become intense and even attack when he refuses to think them. I told him that it would be best to treat them like white noise for awhile, like the neighbors went to work and left their television on real loud. Even though you can hear it through the wall, you would not sit there and listen to it. That is the way to treat the intrusive thoughts, just ignore them as much as you can and get on with your day. Their attack will only last a short time because as they lose your attention, they are losing their food source. They cannot exist without your thinking them!

After that we parted, he went back to work and so did I. Two days later I called him to check his progress, he picked up the phone and I said, "Hey"? In a much stressed out voice he said, "Doug, the thoughts are getting worse. I answered, "didn't I tell you that it might get worse for a couple of days"? Apprehensively he said, "yeah". "What does the thoughts getting worse mean"? I asked him. "Well according to you, it means that it's working". "And what do you think you ought to do about it" I asked. He said, "I think I am going to keep practicing the exercise".

He called me about ten days later and kidded with me when he asked me where he should send the check, I said, "no charge my

friend”.

You may need to treat those thoughts like white noise for the next few days.

Recovery is because of three things.

- The first is becoming knowledgeable of the true nature of thoughts, how they develop and what sustains them and makes them so intrusive.
- Second, knowing that when you stop thinking the thoughts and talking about them, you stop feeding them and sustaining them and they stop being intrusive and begin to dissipate.
- Third, by using a proven method of being still you will be able to stop thinking and feeding the thoughts and that diminishes their power to be intrusive.

Through regular practice of that little exercise my friend quickly learned to take back control of what was going on in his mind because the exercise is an exercise in controlling your attention. The practice enabled him to take his attention away from unwanted thoughts and feelings in a way that they quickly lost their power and place in his mind. By exercising a little discipline he quickly learned how to stop thinking the thoughts that bothered him.

How many times have we wanted to make all of the thoughts in our head just stop! Learning how to stop the thoughts is what is taught here, the simple little exercise I call Being Still is a method of regaining control and stopping the thoughts, it is about taking our life back in a few short days, not months or years, but in just days!

Instead of constantly thinking and talking about his thoughts, he learned how to stop thinking them. He learned that he needed to stop thinking and talking about the thoughts he was having because talking about and thinking them just magnified them and made them stronger and more dominant in his mind.

By exercising a little mental discipline my friend quickly learned how to stop thinking the thoughts that bothered him.

The thoughts that are fluttering through your mind at this moment are affecting you and your life in more ways than you can ever imagine.

The power to change is all in where you place your attention!

Those seemingly powerless and insignificant things that we call thoughts that are fluttering through your mind at this moment in time are designing, creating and becoming the very substance of your life. And they can only exist there because you think them. As they are passing through your mind and you are allowing yourself to give them your attention, you are feeding them. You will sometimes ask, where do the thought come from and what came first the thought or your attention to it? It is not important to consider that question at this time, what is important is knowing how and why it is that if you deny that thought your attention it cannot exist anymore. The reason it appeared isn't as important as knowing that the reason it keeps coming back is because you give it some attention by thinking it.

Whatever your condition is, whether you are happy or depressed, have PTSD, thoughts of suicide, even bi-polar condition or any of the other mental afflictions people face, the key and solution to real healing is by changing the thoughts that you think. But the "catch 22" reality is that you cannot change your thoughts by simply thinking about it or talking about it.

You must gain control of what you allow yourself to think by controlling what thoughts you give your attention to. Initially the only real control you have in your mind is your attention.