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The Value of Positive Thinking

It seems the old saying, "It's mind over matter," may actually be true when it comes to the effects of positive thinking:

- Medical researchers have documented psychosomatic conditions, where the mind generated physical effects on the body that were measurable. Scientists at Wake Forest University published their research in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. Volunteers in the experiment had their brains scanned by a functional magnetic resonance imaging as heat was applied to their legs. Because the scientists understated the degree of heat to be applied, the volunteers' expectations reduced reports of pain by more than 28% - similar to an analgesic dose of the potent painkiller morphine. In addition, activity in areas of the brain related to registering sensory pain and the emotional processing of pain (the primary somatosensory cortex, the insular cortex and the anterior cingulate cortex), was decreased. In conclusion, doctors noted that pain is more than just signals emanating from a physical region and their results showed positive thinking could be as powerful as shot of morphine for relieving pain – meaning that by merely expecting pain to be less, it will be less.
- On a mental and emotional level, positive thinking produces results that are physically experienced in your brain. The research of Dr. Herbert Benson, of the Harvard Medical Clinic, has found that positive beliefs *of any kind* revive top-down nerve cell firing patterns in the brain. These brain patterns are associated with feelings of wellness and have been found, (through Dr. Benson's extensive research), to generate significant healing effects on the body.
- Dr. Benson's scientific findings can be regarded as a sort of groundwork for metaphysical concepts such as The Law of Attraction. This principle, which has received much attention due to the 2006 book and film "*The Secret*," has been handed down through time (through the philosophies of Hinduism, Hermetics, and Theosophy), to explain the cause-and-effect principle that you get what you think about; your thoughts determine your experience.

Pessimistic thoughts or feelings can only produce negative results. So it is important to neutralize negativity before you find yourself grumbling, complaining or harboring ill feelings.

- Stay within your power by focusing on what you can do right now (do not dwell on what has occurred in the past), and see these positive actions leading you forward. Remember, Dr. Benson clinically proved that belief *of any kind* re-orientates your brain into top-down firing!
- Replace worry with a positive statement. Fill moments of doubt and stress with positive reinforcement. Repeat any positive statement that brings you a good feeling. For example, you may like the Star Wars phrase, "May the force be with you," as an empowering affirmation. Or the Roman saying, "Fortune favors the bold" can lift emotions and inspire you.
- Choose an inspirational phrase, or spontaneously verbalize, whatever reassurance you need to hear. Filling the emotional void with positive thoughts reinforces emotions to work for you, not against you.