

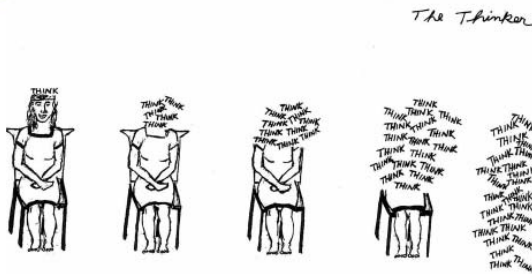


Understanding Peace of Mind

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Tornados were part of my life growing up on a South Dakota farm. We watched the clouds, listened to weather alerts, learned to warn each other and take precautions. I recall my 70 year old mother sitting on the couch reassuring my young daughter during a tornado warning. “Grandma has lived through tornados many times so don’t be afraid.” Together they watched the ominous sky and my child began learning about maintaining a peaceful state of mind.

What is your state of mind?



Mental tornados are a very common and large part of life. Unfortunately, most of us never learn what causes or prevents these personal internal storms. Yet, we each continually create our own tornados rather than keeping our peace of mind.

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Our thought tornados are not caused by anyone or anything outside of us. The only way we come to really **KNOW** this is true is from the proof of our own experience. Consider these examples.

Have you ever realized you scare yourself? I certainly have. When I was learning to ride my bike, I peddled down the gravel driveway to the country road, then turned my bike around and raced for home. I had seen a huge bull! I began to ride faster and faster; the bull was preparing to charge. Of course, I crashed on the gravel and cut my knee deeply. Mama came running, stopped the bleeding, and calmed my hysteria as I shrieked about the bull. Then she paused and said, “Look behind you.” There was no bull! The big wooden corner fence posts across the road stood unmoving. The scar on my knee is a good reminder 65 years later that I create my own mental tornados! A charging bull indeed!

Today, like everyone else on earth, I could be having an F5 tornado in my head. Just pick the topic: Coronavirus, stock market, political leader conflicts, health care system collapse, stores without toilet paper, discord everywhere and the list goes on. But the truth is no one and nothing outside of me can cause me to create a personal tornado inside. I throw out my own peace of mind – or not.

Only I am in charge of how I meet all challenges in life. I KNOW this is true because I have learned all human beings, including me, have wisdom inside. If I wait, an *insight* will come to me . . . always, but in its own time. This is the way we all are created. I cannot summons an insight. I can only trust an insight will arrive. I don't get to say it must show up by 2 p.m. today, wrapped in a blue box tied with a golden ribbon!

If you don't believe me, explore this. Recall a time in the past when an idea came to you from *out of the blue*? What difference did your insight make? How did it change your experience? If you can't think of something now, just let the question sit on your back burner. The answer may come to you later. Try this another way. Do you recall a time when you scared yourself? What happened? How did you discover *you were doing it* to yourself?

Finally, look at your state of mind today. Are you at peace? Are there mental tornados in your life? What do you know you need to do to see things as they really are or can be? Consider just listening, waiting. Above all trust you are invisibly the creator of your own mental tornados. No person or circumstance can ever cause your tornado.

You alone have the power to realize when it is time to step back, not act, and let yourself rest in the peaceful certainty that a new perspective will come to you. From this vantage point, you will know what to do. You will not get in your own way. You will see the *mess* before you with calmer eyes. *You will know you are not the mess. And you can be assured your own natural well-being cannot be destroyed. It is hardwired into you and every other person.*

When people around you are out of control, living in horrific mental tornados, do not let them paint your world. Step back. Find your calm and if that is hard to do, do nothing. Go about your business. Something will come to you and you will find your way through the mess. Trust the process!

Once your have experienced your own mental tornado and seen your personal role in creating and keeping it alive, things change. You have a self-righting capacity, a natural wisdom. We might call this *ordinary magic* – the natural capacity to discover your own well-being and maintain peace of mind. Step forward from that newly discovered *KNOWING*.

Sometimes we can't seem to find our way. In those times it may be helpful to turn to a professional for help. *KNOWING* to *seek* or *accept* that help also shows up as an insight from within you. Relief comes and hope begins to grow.

The simple truth is, as unbelievable as it seems, health and happiness are only one thought away for every human being. The key is understanding that you cannot go searching for that one thought. You are built for insight. These lightbulb ideas are your birthright. No one is an exception.

The scar on my knee is proof we all can scare ourselves – literally throw out our peace of mind – with our thinking. We have 60,000 thoughts a day. Naturally we frequently get stuck on a thought, sometimes for years. Freeing ourselves is always possible. Get out of your own way and notice new insights as they appear to you. Peace of mind is your natural state of mind.

Note: Theory and research behind these ideas are the operating philosophy of the National Resilience Resource Center founded and directed by Kathy Marshall Emerson. The *Thinker* image has been adapted from the work of Richard Stine. Kathy Marshall Emerson is Executive Director of the private National Resilience Resources Center providing training and technical assistance. She is retired from the University of Minnesota and continues as adjunct faculty to teach CSpH 5201, Spirituality and Resilience. Contact marsh008@umn.edu See <http://www.nationalresilienceresource.com/>