

## THE POWER OF PEACE OF MIND

*A vision for positive change*

What if, one day, all over the world, millions of people experienced a moment of insight about the power of thinking?

What if ...

A troubled young man on a balcony in Morocco, about to hurl a bomb into a crowd of tourists, suddenly stops. He sets the bomb down carefully at his side. The murderous, vengeful thoughts in his mind fragment, and **in a moment of blinding clarity, he sees that his anger is merely a wave of thoughts, a wave that can break upon the shore of his life and dissipate harmlessly.**

A woman in Greece, standing over the crib of her howling baby and thinking she must pick him up and shake him hard until he is silent, suddenly stops. She reaches down and caresses the baby's hot, wet cheek. The frustrated, helpless thoughts in her mind disappear, and in a moment, **she sees that her helplessness is a passing thought of fear that she might not be a good mother, a fearful thought that is dissolved by a surge of love and compassion for her infant.**

A diplomat in Switzerland, about to present a complex and disheartening set of demands to another diplomat to thwart and stall the hope for settlement of a border dispute in the Middle East, suddenly stops. He tosses the papers aside, and sees the man across the table from him as a gentle soul, as distressed as he is by what might happen to his people if war breaks out. **The complexity and impossibility of the situation that had appeared so hopeless fade away, and his mind is filled with a simple solution, one that will end the hostilities. He knows, right then, that good will can come to mind as readily as bad will.**

A scientist in Berlin, on the brink of sending a devastating series of e-mails to fellow-scientists debunking the work of his primary rival for the Nobel Prize, suddenly pulls back from the computer. He sees that his memo contains the ravings of an insecure mind, beset by fears of losing his own prestige and power. In a moment of reflection, he begins to think of supporting and collaborating with his rival, so that their discoveries can offer help to the world more quickly. **He is baffled that his thinking could have taken him so close to a devastating action, and sees, in an instant, that he does not have to act on every thought that comes to mind.**

An angry husband in Los Angeles, brandishing a knife as he chases his crying wife through the house, suddenly drops the knife and falls into a chair. It has just occurred to him that he might kill his wife, his children's mother, and he cannot remember what started it, or why he is so enraged at her. He is filled with remorse, and **in a moment of insight, he realizes that his rage comes from thoughts within him, not from her, and he sees that he can stop it by looking away from those thoughts and quieting himself.**

The executives and marketing team for a major U.S. tobacco company are engaged in planning a strong appeal to young people in emerging nations. As they envision the thousands of young people who will begin to consume their product, they suddenly pause. Each of them thinks of a beloved young child in his life, and imagines that child, beset by powerful marketing, beginning to smoke. Suddenly of one mind, they stop talking and close their folders. “What were we thinking? How could we?” someone asks. In a moment, the discussion turns to contacting scientists developing alternative uses for tobacco. **They see that their creative energy is unleashed by turning their minds to what they do not yet know, rather than clinging to the familiar.**

A desperate man in India stands atop a cliff, consumed with depressing thoughts that there is nothing for which to live. He is about to jump to his death when his mind suddenly clears. He looks around him and sees the beauty of the summer sky, the tender green of the landscape below him, the warm hues of the smooth rocks on which he stands. Immediately, his mind is filled with thoughts of gratitude for the gift of life. **He steps back from the edge, realizing that his depressing thoughts come and go, just as shadows of the clouds pass across the landscape.**

What if people everywhere suddenly saw the obvious, the truth that is so close to all of us that it goes unnoticed: **A change of thought is a change of reality.** Peace, good will, charity, kindness, love -- all profound human feelings that bring hope, comfort and joy to people -- could suffuse the earth. It could happen faster than the blink of an eye in one moment, a tiny point of quietude. Into any moment of quiet, healing insight steps lightly, humble and unbidden. If such a moment were seen for what it is, a new thought, soon to be followed by more new thoughts, in a perpetual flow of life-creating events, people could find peace. The nature of thought, the natural movement of thought like the atmosphere circling the globe, like the oceans swirling around the planet, like the rotation of the earth that brings the seasons, would turn us all away from focusing on the contents of any thought to finding gratitude for the power of thinking itself. Change would not seem difficult, but rather seem inevitable, natural and kind.

No thought can trouble a mind at peace. Internal quietude is a state in which people pay no more than necessary notice to the contents of their thinking, as ideas and images pass gracefully through their minds. A mind at peace is a mind in harmony with the flow of life itself, a mind creating a responsive moment-to-moment life via thinking, not creating fear or distress beyond the moment because of reactions to the contents of any particular thoughts.

Mankind has long been engaged in a search for that state, for balance, equanimity, peace of mind. It has appeared elusive not because we have had so little of it, but rather because we do not pay attention to how much of it we do have. This is the paradox of peace. A mind at peace is not engaged in self-examination, but engaged in creating life. So the moments of peace pass by and do not register. Profound exceptions register because they stand out. At one extreme, everyone registers on moments of epiphany or discovery or remarkable courage or faith. At the other extreme, everyone registers on moments of stress or fear or anxiety or depression. We try to balance one extreme with the other, rather than simply embracing the extremes as

manifestations of the same principles that govern ALL experience, regardless of the contents of that experience.

The discovery of the principles that explain the entire range of human experience has opened the door to mankind reclaiming natural peace of mind. Peace of mind is not found in sweet images or high-minded ideas or efforts to clear away negativity or efforts to bring good thoughts to mind. Peace of mind is found in embracing it all -- seeing the illusion of content, any and all content -- and finding hope in the universal capacity continually to create new content. The principles of Mind, Consciousness and Thought, described in our time by philosopher Sydney Banks\*, refer to the source of all experience in the universe, to the flow of life energy through every living thing to continue the infinite process of creation. In human beings, the flow of that creative energy is through thought brought to life by consciousness. We are continually able to create our personal life via mental activity, and, through our senses, continually to experience that creation as our reality.

Peace of mind is the inevitable state of mind for one who truly sees the power of thought. That power is visible and manifest in every moment. Any thought-created reality can be experienced without fear by a person who recognizes the inside-out flow of that reality. Through understanding the principles that explain our experience of life, mankind can see imagination as a vast, untapped creative power, rather than a trap for fears and worries or a receptacle of impossible dreams.

The vision, the hope, the certainty of the principles, is that each person's moment-to-moment life is a part of the creative process, the life process in which we are all connected, all engaged, all enjoying the same power, regardless of how we are each using that power at any given point in time. The power to think is the power to find freedom from any thought in the realization that life is all thought.

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\* Sydney Banks (1931-2009) is the author of six books, and numerous recorded lectures, which reflect and explain his understanding of the principles underlying human experience. This understanding arose from a profound insight about the nature of life and the spiritual power of thought, which he experienced in 1974. He dedicated the remainder of his life to sharing this insight with humanity.