

The Spiritual Scientist

An Ezine for Those Who Think

Published by VOICE, ISKCON, Pune

FAITH LIFT

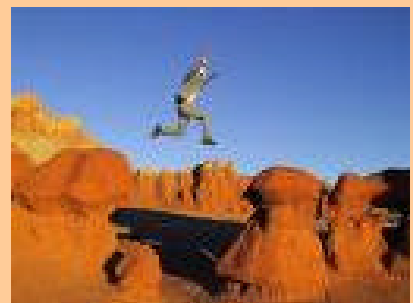


If you think you can - and if you think you can't - in both cases, you are right. This pithy saying illustrates not just the power of attitude, but also a scientific and spiritual truth. One of the most significant scientific developments of the last century was the discovery of the mind-body connection. Medical researchers discovered that our thoughts can both hurt and heal us. Psychosomatic illnesses as well as phobias illustrate the power of thoughts to negatively influence the body. Positive thoughts have been observed to increase endorphin levels, which are conducive to vibrant physical health. Conversely, negative thoughts are seen to increase adrenalin levels, which sap bodily vigor. Placebo effect - the surprising medical observation that patients who believe that they are under proper medication recover even if administered just sugar pills - signifies that thoughts can activate healing. The upcoming field of psychoneuro-immunology is based on the correlation between mental strength and physical immunity.

Spiritually, thoughts don't just determine things; thoughts are things, albeit in subtle form. The Bhagavad-gita (8.6) declares that our thoughts determine our future - both in this life and the next. So scientifically and spiritually, positive thinking is desirable and beneficial. Is positive thinking an inborn trait or can it be cultivated? By genetic influence, which is a result of good karma from past lives, some people may have a greater tendency to see the "silver lining in the cloud", than others. But upbringing and association also influence our thinking abilities. And most importantly, our thoughts are determined not as much by our conditionings or conditions as by our own choices. So all of us have the potential to tap the power of thoughts and become positive thinkers if we acquire the necessary knowledge and training.

Lets do a quick thought exercise: sit down in a peaceful place, breath deeply and observe our thoughts. We can classify the observed thoughts into four categories-

We will soon realize that our default thoughts often tend to be either waste or negative, resulting in absentmindedness or depression respectively. By vigilance and diligence, we can train ourselves to reject the negative and waste thoughts - or, better still, replace them with positive. If we consciously cultivate this habit, we will soon find ourselves mentally and physically stronger in facing life's ups and downs.



Spiritual thinking enables us to further tap the power of thoughts by raising our life to a higher, more empowering dimension. Positive thinking is very difficult when confronted with extremely negative circumstances such as shattering of cherished plans or outrageous behavior of others. Spiritual knowledge enables us to go far beyond positive perception of reality to perception of positive reality. As long as we are spiritually uninformed, positive thinking alone will fall short in tackling the negative realities of life. Nothing illustrates this often-overlooked limitation of positive thinking more than the greatest - and the most neglected - truth of life: death. If a loved one passes away, will positive thinking bring back that person? If someone is afflicted by a terminal disease, will positive thinking save that person from imminent death?

Spiritual positive thinking enables us to understand and harmonize with the spiritual positive purpose of our existence. We are all souls, spiritual beings, beloved children of God and are entitled to rejoice in eternal loving exchanges with Him. The truly positive purpose of our present human lives is to awaken our dormant love for God, experience His unlimited love for us and ultimately returning back to His everlasting abode of ever-increasing bliss. Spiritual enlightenment blesses us with the vision to see all events in our life as expression of God's love for us. Spiritual empowerment enables us to choose our actions so that they become expressions of our love for Him. No wonder Jesus declared loving God wholeheartedly as the most important commandment. The very word Islam refers to loving surrender to God. The Bhagavad-gita unequivocally declares constant devotional meditation on God, Krishna, as the pinnacle in the evolution of human thinking. We can most easily and effectively experience God's love for us and express our love for Him by chanting His bona fide Holy Names like Jehovah, Allah and Krishna. God being omnipotent fully manifests Himself in His Names and gives us the strength to reject negative and waste thoughts and fills our mind with positive spiritual thoughts. Thus spiritual positive thinking enables us to live positively by harnessing our latent positive spiritual energy. And at the time of death, it will enable us to leave positively by opening the door to eternal life. Hence cultivating loving thoughts for loving God is the ultimate key for tapping the power of thoughts.