



## Making Mindset Changes Makes Lifestyle Changes

Mental health gets such a bad reputation now days. It is almost like as soon as we hear it, we want to RUN far away. It has somehow been paired with the likes of colonoscopies and mammograms...NOT our favorite activities.

I would like to offer a different perspective of mental health. Good mental health is simply good mind management. A well-managed mind means that you are aware of the following:

1. Your THOUGHTS create your FEELINGS
2. Your thoughts are OPTIONS

Let's dig into this a bit more!

### **Your Thoughts Create Your Feelings**

Contrary to popular belief, circumstances do not cause us to feel happy or sad. Our circumstances in life are just neutral facts. Some examples of circumstances are:

- I am a disabled veteran
- I lost my job during the pandemic
- I am 200 pounds

All these statements are neutral facts that can be verified and confirmed as true. It is our THOUGHTS that makes us FEEL good or bad about these facts. Let me prove it:

- (Circumstance) I am a disabled veteran...(thought) I am worthless...(feeling) depressed
- (Circumstance) I lost my job during the pandemic...(thought) I can't pay my bills...(feeling) scared
- (Circumstance) I am 200 pounds...(thought) I am unlovable...(feeling) hopeless

**A well-managed mind allows us to regain control of our mental health by managing our thoughts.**

### **Your Thoughts Are OPTIONS**

Just because you think it does NOT mean it is true. Understanding this statement is one of the best things that you can do for yourself because it gives you permission to think a different thought that makes you feel better.

ALL the thoughts that we think are options that we COULD choose to believe. We could also choose NOT to believe them. Let's look at the examples from above and think an optional thought:

- (Circumstance) I am a disabled veteran...(thought) I am so glad I could serve...(feeling) proud!

-(Circumstance) I lost my job during the pandemic...(thought) Now I have a fresh start...(feeling) excited!  
-(Circumstance) I am 200 pounds...(thought) I am down 10 pounds from last month...(feeling) hopeful!

As veterans, we sometimes falsely believe that the way we think is the ONLY way to think. This leaves us feeling trapped with our thoughts and hopeless for any reprieve. Sometimes, just knowing that we can choose to think another thought is all that we need to snap out of that cycle.

**A well-managed mind allows us to regain control of our mental health by choosing an optional thought that makes us feel better.**

Mental health does not have to be something that you avoid! It can be something that you quietly work on every day. A well-managed mind leads to overall wellness because you soon realize that there is not an area of your life that you cannot improve when you focus on improving your thoughts around that subject.