

The “Root” of the Problem

By Lisa Schilling

Why is it so hard to live a healthy lifestyle? Today we have more information on how to be healthy, more resources and yet we face more preventable illness than ever. This proves the point, “Just because someone knows the right things to do does not guarantee that they will do it”. In my own life this is very true. I understand nutrition and exercise but often don’t make the personal choices that reflect that. This bothered me and it sent me in search of answers. I began researching the subject and discovered that most of the problem had to do with the mind. The brain is a complex computer. On a conscious level we set goals based on the information we take in and know to be true. However on a subconscious level we have a very strong but subtle programming that has been established through years of repetition and conditioning. Whether this programming was right or wrong, true or false, the result of it is what we believe and what we believe about ourselves affects every aspect of our life, our chances of success and ability to create positive change.

Programming is what we have accepted from the outside world, or fed to ourselves. It sets up our beliefs and a chain reaction begins from that. Dr. Shad Helmstetter puts it like this, “In logical progression, what we believe determines our attitudes, affects our feelings, directs our behavior and determines our success or failure”. He notes this programming-results cycle, 1) Programming creates beliefs. 2) Beliefs create attitudes. 3) Attitude creates feelings. 4) Feelings determine actions. 5) Actions create results. That is how the brain works. So the issue becomes if you want to create healthy changes in your life, you must first address the subconscious programming you have previously accepted. How do you do

that? You start by listening to your internal dialogue. You know, that little voice that keeps a running conversation in your head, your mental thoughts. The brain will introduce thoughts into your mental dialogue based on your prior programming. Often it is this subtle little detail that stands in the way of you starting or maintaining healthy habits that you know in your conscious mind to be beneficial. The subconscious messages sabotage your efforts at every turn.

Your mind only knows what you tell it and it believes it to be true whether it is reality or not. If your mental dialogue is always interjecting thoughts of “I hate to exercise”, “I am so tired”, “I really want some junk food”, and other common thought patterns, this is what your body will work to make reality. Understand this is the “root” of the issue. Just as weeds have roots, so do our issues. You can mow over a weed and it may seem dealt with, for a time. But we all know that until you deal with the root, you will “deal with that weed” forever. Many of us deal with the weed of unhealthy habits because we never deal with the root of the problem. The root is our subconscious programming.

The only way to effectively re-program what has taken years to establish is one thought at a time. You must first recognize when those nagging negative thoughts enter your mind. Seek and destroy! You have a choice, you do not have to feel whatever thought falls into your head. You can say, “I am going to look at this in a new way.” When those thoughts come, stop and reframe the thought. “I know that I will feel great when I get done exercising.” “I will have more energy when I eat better and get a little walk in.” “Junk food tastes good now, but I know it leaves me hungry and wanting more. I am going to choose a snack based on what will

make my body feel good for the day, not just the next few minutes.”

With a little practice, intentional thought reframing can begin to positively affect your programming-results cycle. If you need more reinforcement you can write common reframed thoughts on note cards and review them regularly or even post them in frequently viewed areas. Enlist friends to prompt you to reframe when you speak out those negative thoughts. Together as a team, you can deal with the root of your healthy living roadblocks. I know that this works, but just like anything you must commit to it.

I believe this subconscious programming is what keeps most people from doing what the conscious mind wants to do. Empower yourself and take back control of your life. The human mind is amazing. It will do anything possible that you tell it to do, if you tell it often enough and strongly enough. It unconditionally accepts what you tell it as fact and acts accordingly. Be sure you are telling it that you are healthy, that enjoy how you feel when you follow your plan and that you deserve to be healthy and well.

Where the mind goes, the man follows. As Henry Ford once said, “Whether you think that you can or that you can’t, you are right!” Create the belief that you can and remind yourself often. Your brain will believe it and as a result you will live it in your actions. This week, listen to what you are thinking and actively choose to reframe any negative thoughts into statements of hope. You do not have to accept what you have always had. But to have something different, you must do something different. Commit to change your thinking patterns and you will see positive change in your life. Great changes, changes you created!