



Thought-Generated Reality

Dear

I was at the park last Saturday walking my dogs. The route we take them every day is about 1.5 miles and takes about 35-40 minutes to complete. Where I live in NI, 35-40 minutes can be a long time as far as the ability the weather has to change is concerned. I usually check the weather forecast before I leave to see what the chances are of it raining. On Saturday it was really nice outside when I was getting ready to drive to the park in my shorts and t-shirt, so I didn't check the

forecast. It was a beautiful morning, and I was looking forward to a nice walk in the sun.

By the time I got to the park the wind had picked up and what had been a fairly clear sky was getting dark. Within five minutes of me leaving the car park it had started to rain. My pace quickened as I started to drag the dogs round the park and my mood along with the sky darkened. 'How could you be so stupid to not check the weather forecast?' ... 'Why didn't you just bring a coat? You know the weather can change so quickly' ... 'You are going to get soaked. This is going to be a disaster.'

It could have turned it into a disaster, but I caught myself. Or rather I caught my thinking and started to see for the umpteenth time that my mood had nothing to do with the weather and everything to do with my thinking about the weather.

I had reached a part of the walk that was significantly covered by trees and started to see that my story about 'being stupid for not bringing a coat' and that 'it was going to be a disaster' was all made up. I only had a few spots of rain on my top and still about 30 mins to walk. How could I possibly know what way the rest of the walk was going to go. And even if I did get wet, did I really know how I was going to feel. I was using my thoughts to create a judgemental story about myself as well as a story about a future that didn't exist.

Once I caught my thinking and started to see that my story was made up, new thoughts started to come to me. 'If the rain came quickly, it might also leave quickly.' ... 'If you get soaked you get soaked and you can just get a shower when you get home.' ... 'There are a lot of trees in the park, you can play a game of adjusting your route to stay as dry as you can, even if it is raining.'

By now it was raining more heavily. But my mood had lightened. I stopped dragging the dogs and found myself playing the game of avoiding the rain by sticking with the trees as much as possible. Suddenly I noticed the dogs. They were walking along just normally as if nothing was wrong. My mood changed again. I had been creating the idea in my mind that I was stupid, that I should have brought a coat, that I was going to get soaked and that the walk was going to be a

disaster. It was all made up. None of that had any basis in reality. Yes, it was raining. Yes, I was getting a bit wet. The rest was made up.

By the time I got to the part of the walk where there weren't so many trees and I was out in the open the rain had stopped, and the sky was clearing. The rain left as quickly as it had arrived. The ground under my feet was properly wet. It had been raining heavily here and I had missed it. I smiled, wandered back to the car and headed home completely dry by this time.

A few years ago, I came across the idea (which is actually a principle), from work of Sydney Banks, that we all live in a thought created reality. Michael Neill said it well when he said, '*We think we are experiencing our reality, but what we are experiencing is our thinking.*'

In life, there is what is happening to us and around us and then there is our story about it. The thought created story we have about what is happening. The meaning we make about what is happening. What we experience is not the events but the story we have about the events.

Initially I thought this couldn't be true. Surely the circumstances have something to do with my experience. As I explored this, especially when life was more difficult, I found that my experience of anything could and would change without anything in my circumstances changing. I also started to see that two people could see exactly the same circumstances in two completely different ways. I started to see that I really was living in the feeling of my thinking, not my circumstances.

I cannot begin to tell you how big a difference this has made in my life ... and increasingly for my clients. It has allowed me to take my power back from my circumstances so many times I couldn't even begin to count. Sometimes it's with little things like getting caught out by the weather when I'm walking the dogs. Sometimes it's with bigger things life throws at me. Instead of me having to fix my circumstances to feel different, all I really have to do is notice that I'm thinking myself into a slump or a panic or a crisis. I don't always catch it when I get tripped up by my thinking, but when I do there is invariably a space in which new thoughts can arise that allow me to deal with my circumstances in very different and often creative ways.

Don't take my word for this. As my coach Ankush often says, '*test don't trust!*' Try it out for yourself. Start noticing how your feelings change during the course of a day, particularly when circumstances don't change. What is it really that creates the changes in your experience? Is it circumstances or is that your thoughts about them?

Michael Neill put it nicely again when he said, "*You're never more than one thought away from a whole new experience of being alive.*"

Try this out for yourself. Take your power from your circumstances. I'd love to hear what happens for you.

Have a great weekend!



Peter McCammon

peter@pm-coaching.co.uk

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PM Coaching

37a Bush Road
Dungannon
BT71 6QE
Ireland

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