

The
**THOUGHT
EXCHANGE**

OVERCOMING OUR RESISTANCE
TO LIVING A ***SENSATIONAL*** LIFE



DAVID FRIEDMAN

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“Practicing David Friedman’s THOUGHT EXCHANGE ideas has been the most fundamentally life-changing, positive experience I’ve ever had.”

LUCIE ARNAZ

“I’ve had the privilege of attending many inspirational and motivational presentations in my years in ministry. Few can parallel the excellence that David Friedman brings to the table. He is a natural and gifted educator and musician with an uncanny capacity to draw out from individuals their inherent gifts and talents. By applying the wisdom found in these pages, you will be able to turn desire into demonstration and realize your inherent magnificence.”

REV. RUSSELL HEILAND
FIRST UNITY OF ST. PETERSBURG

“David’s book was like a miracle dropped in my lap at a time of great need. His concepts helped me to flip my thoughts about a situation and reach for different possibilities about the way I was seeing a painful circumstance. I am now living my dream life instead of the unhappy life that I thought was my future. Thank you, David, for giving us The Thought Exchange!”

TANYA MURPHY

“You brought a lot of class to our program and personally helped me with a road block I could not get around. I am better because I met you, and look forward to our paths crossing again.”

ELIZABETH A. JOYNER
PRESIDENT – OKLAHOMA WOMEN’S BAR ASSOCIATION

“Thanks for taking the time to address your own issues so that you’re now able to explain these concepts so clearly that we can actually understand and use them.”

JOHN LOCHNER
UNITY OF DALLAS

“It was as if something unlocked within me at The Thought Exchange Wednesday night. I’ve read countless books, and all roads have lead to your door. What you give, share and teach with such clarity and simplicity all pulls together on a personal level and the professional, creative level. It is, for me, like a giant piece of a puzzle that kept eluding me, and now I’ve found it.”

DORA RUBIN
NEW YORK CITY

“There isn’t a way for me to express my gratitude for you or for your work. I have a renewed way of looking at the world since I began studying with you. I never truly believed that I could walk through my feelings. I have now done it, and I know that this new ability is a direct result of going to your classes. The moment when things “clicked” was just astonishing.”

MELISSA GARNO
NEW YORK CITY

“Everyone was stunned by the emotional impact of the music and I believe forever changed by the experience.”

“Yesterday was superb... totally beyond my expectations!”

“Such talent and many of the songs had “brilliant” written all over them. So many tears in the audience.”

WORKSHOP & CONCERT ATTENDEES
UNITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

“I can’t think of any experience like this, where the level of heartfelt consciousness is so active and trusting, and inspiring for us to continue working on our most creative project, ourselves... and to have someone like you who really gets it all and makes it happen is a gift. I feel very lucky to have landed in this space. It’s an incredible experience which requires work, hard work, in allowing feelings to take center stage.”

ARJE SHAW
AUTHOR OF “THE FIX”

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And most importantly....

No matter how specific the method of working, no matter how "controlled" or "in the mind" it may seem, let us never forget that all that we do operates within a system that is much greater than we are and that is essentially unknowable. Call it Spirit, call it God, call it Source, I give thanks for the reliable, unswerving, omnipresence whose laws cannot fail and within which our possibilities are truly unlimited.

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AUTHOR'S FOREWARD

“Our thoughts create our reality. What we think appears before us in the world. Change your thoughts and you change your life.”

We all know this. Why don't we do it?

With the recent mainstream popularity of *The Secret* and so many other wonderful books and seminars on New Thought, people are, more than ever, thinking that all you have to do is think a thought and whatever you want will appear.

In my experience, this is actually true. A new thought does create a new reality. But why is it that when most of us try it, we soon become discouraged and don't follow through? We're not stupid. We're not lazy. We're not just missing the point. There must be something else to it, something we're not taking into account. There must be something that frightens us, some perceived danger that kicks in when we take on a new thought, that causes us to drop the thought and go back to our old thought.

I began writing this book because, in my own life and in my teaching, I had stumbled upon a way of working with new thought that was producing amazing results in helping people to manifest what they wanted to see in their lives. People were very excited about this, and would jump in, exchange thoughts, and immediately see changes in their lives. But then, for inexplicable reasons, resistance would suddenly come up, people would go back to their old thoughts, and their old patterns of not achieving what they desired would reappear.

I knew I was on to something with “The Thought Exchange,” but I also knew that unless I tackled the resistance, and was able to help people to “stay on the horse” of their new thought through any difficulties that might arise, I would only be telling half the story.

In this book, I tell the whole story. As happens in many New Thought books, you may become very excited as you read the first few chapters and realize that you have in your hands, a way to see all your dreams appear effortlessly in the world before you. But should you, as also often happens, hit that wall of resistance, I promise you, this book will not drop you, but will give you the tools to move through that to a real and true mastery of healing and manifestation.

So join me on a ride that perhaps you have begun many times, and know that this time, I'll stay with you until you get to where you want to go.

INTRODUCTION

Look in a mirror. What do you see there? You see yourself. You see what you're wearing. You see what you look like. Right? But what's really in the mirror? Is there anything real in the mirror? If there was a smudge on the nose of the image in the mirror, could you take Windex and wipe it off? If you didn't like what the image in the mirror was wearing, could you reach into the mirror and change the outfit? Of course not. It would be ridiculous to try, and no one in their right mind would even think of doing that.

And yet, in our lives, we try to do just that every day. We try to get others to behave differently. We think we'll be happier if we can get a raise, find the right partner, or win some personal battle we're fighting. Time and again, we look at the circumstances in our world as though they're "out there," and try to change them, "out there."

What if the world is not where real life takes place, but merely a mirror of our thoughts, an outward reflection designed purely to show us and reflect back to us what we are thinking? Without a mirror, you have no way of knowing what your own face looks like, yet any change you might make to your face as a result of what you see in the mirror would be made on your face, not in the mirror.

Like many people I know, I got into spiritual work for, shall we say, non-spiritual reasons. Although I claimed I was seeking "inner peace," communion with God, a deeper understanding, if truth be told, I was really seeking all these things so that I could have the "stuff" I wanted. Somehow, I thought that the source of my happiness would be a lot of money, a great home (or two or three), the right relationship, massive success in my work, etc. If I paid attention, I noticed that people who had those things were not necessarily happier than I was, but I tended to ignore that. Whatever it took, prayer, meditation, EST, The Forum, Primal Scream, therapy, retreats, I was going to do those things so that I could have "stuff." I actually thought of inner peace and harmony as the booby prize, things I would have to try to settle for if I was unsuccessful at achieving the REAL purpose in life: having success, money

and “a relationship.” I would hear a statement like, “Seek ye first the Kingdom” and silently add, “So I can have a new car.” Sound familiar?

So I set out on my journey to try to find a way to get “stuff.” I figured that if I could uncover the secret to manifesting what I wanted in the REAL world, I could control my life, have whatever I wanted whenever I wanted it, and “Be Happy.”

So many systems, so many new thought institutions, so many books, offer the promise that if you follow their method, you will manifest whatever you want, and thus lead a fulfilled and happy life. I’ve read most of those books, participated in many of those seminars, but somehow I always ended up frustrated and disappointed. I began to wonder why, so I made up my mind to explore that very question.

I decided I would do this by observing life in general, and specifically my experience of it, and asking the question, “What is irrefutably true?” The answers I found were very surprising, and in fact, the opposite of what I’d expected. Not only that, they were the opposite of what I’d hoped to find. But in the end (and of course there’s no such thing as the end, just where we are right now) I found everything I’d been looking for, but in surprising and different ways.

This book is the story of that journey, the steps I took along the way, and how each piece of progress led to the next wall, the next blockage, the next question which had to be addressed and answered in order to progress. Each step seemed to be “the answer,” until I ran into another question, another “loophole” which led to the next step. But suddenly, without realizing how far I’d travelled, I found myself in a life that looked and felt completely different, because my life was being lived in a completely different context, in a completely different place. In this place, it didn’t matter what events occurred. It didn’t matter what “happened,” because in the place I lived, none of that had any effect on my happiness.

Now that idea may seem disappointing to some. “Where’s the success? Where’s the striving? Where’s the excitement?” But think of it like this. Imagine being in the stock market, and having a system where

you make money whether the stock market goes up or down? Doesn't matter. You make money.

A great deal of my journey was made using the stock market as a laboratory, as money had always been something by which I'd measured my success. I don't know about you, but I'd rather make money all the time, not just when conditions are a certain way. And I'd rather know that I'm happy and successful all the time, no matter what's happening.

I won't tell you right away what that surprising and different place is. I think the only way to truly get there is to take the journey and go through all the steps of discovery as I did (and as I, of course, continue to do).

The first section of this book is my personal story, which led up to the discoveries and revelations that changed my life. The facts and events are particular to me, but hopefully they will resonate with what you have experienced in your earlier life.

If you want to go right to the Thought Exchange Method without the story, simply skip to Section 2 and begin reading there.

At any rate, hopefully you'll recognize your own story as you walk through mine with me.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book has been written and rewritten many times. My original goal in writing it was to give the public a succinct description of the Thought Exchange process and how it could be used to “get what you want” in the world. But as I wrote the book, and continued to teach and practice Thought Exchange, I began to discover that there was so much more to it than that. Not only did I keep uncovering new applications, new areas in which Thought Exchange could be used effectively, but I also eventually had a complete turn-around in the way I saw life and in my understanding of what’s important and where we really live.

My goal in writing the book now became twofold. One, to take the reader on the entire transformational journey that I have traveled up to now with Thought Exchange, and two, to provide a complete reference guide where people could find the information they needed to apply Thought Exchange to whatever areas of their life and work they wished.

Hence, this book is divided into sections which can be read together or separately. The only sections you must read in order to understand everything else are Sections 2, 3 and 4, which describe the basic Thought Exchange® principles as they unfolded to me over time. If you want a complete history of my journey from living on the “outside” to living on the “inside,” by all means read the entire book.

Once you’ve read Sections 2, 3 and 4, if you’re having trouble staying with your sensations, read Section 5. If you have a particular area of interest, such as Singing, Corporate Work, Health, Forgiveness or numerous others, you can go to the specific sections or chapters that address those. If you want a group of inspirational stories, revelatory experiences and ideas pertaining to Thought Exchange, there’s a chapter full of those. And if you want examples of “new thoughts” or definitions of terms as we use them in Thought Exchange, those can be found in the Appendix at the back of the book.

Sometimes, in order to make sure that each section can stand alone as well as be part of this book, I will repeat information from one section in another section. If you are reading the book in its entirety, do not skip these repeats, but simply use them to strengthen your insights or give you new ones.

One thing I must point out is that although these individual sections stand on their own, none of them gives the whole story. The information in each section can be applied without reading the other sections (as long as you've read sections 2, 3 and 4 to get the basic Thought Exchange® principles) but remember that the conclusions and revelations that we come to at the end of each section are only steps on a continuing path to complete transformation. Only by reading the whole book will you get the whole story.

However you use this book, I hope it brings you to new levels of understanding that enhance your experience of your life and its possibilities. As the title promises, it is my fervent goal that all who read it come away knowing that life is *sensational*, all the time.

PART I LIFE BEFORE THE
THOUGHT EXCHANGE
PART I THOUGHT EXCHANGE
LIFE BEFORE THE

CHAPTER 1

“THE PURPOSE OF LIFE”

(ACCORDING TO DAVID FRIEDMAN – AGE 5-20)

I spent the first several decades of my life learning, and trying to live, the same things that so many of us were taught. Life was about the physical world. The object of life was to be successful in obtaining the “things” that made one happy. And those things were money, success and “love.”

Money could buy you anything you wanted, give you comfort, give you power, provide you with safety, and keep you away from experiencing many of life’s more disturbing challenges.

Success would mean not only that you were fulfilled in your work, but that you would have a constant sense of joy and contentment, the respect of others, and yes, all the money you would need to buy the things which would make you happy (like homes, cars, trips and even glamorous partners) and avoid the things that would make you unhappy (like flying coach, not being able to pay your bills, having to work at a job you didn’t care for).

And “love.” Love meant having “a relationship,” a marriage to someone who always understood you, who supported you and whom you supported, whom you could count on to give you a feeling of security and happiness and safety at all times. Love also meant a family that was always there for you, and friends on whom you could always depend and with whom you could always have a wonderful time.

This was the object of life. The “things” you needed in order to be happy, were money, success and “love.”

Movie stars were happy. Why? Because they had money, success and “love.” It didn’t matter if they married and divorced several times, or periodically ended up in rehab. They were always with someone

glamorous, they were always starring in movies for which they were getting paid a fortune, so as my grandma Gussie used to say (with Jewish inflection), “What’s not to be happy?”

Business tycoons were happy. They could afford all the luxuries in life, had unlimited financial resources, and could buy their way out of anything unpleasant.

Grandma Gussie (clearly, and perhaps unfortunately, one of the greatest influences on my early philosophy of life) once told my older brother that she “only wanted to see him married.” My brother felt compelled to ask her, “What’s so wonderful about marriage? Is your marriage so great?” to which she replied, “Never mind that. First get married. Then we’ll discuss it!” Marriage made you happy. So you needed to get married as quickly as possible. It didn’t really matter to whom, as long as she was Jewish, though her coming from a rich family would definitely be a plus, since that way you could kill two birds with one stone. Love and money.

So having money, success and love were the goal in life. But they were not really considered an end in themselves, but rather a means to an end. They were the way to find “inner peace,” and “happiness.” By getting things on the outside, you could achieve inner peace and happiness on the inside.

Behind all this was some concept of “God.” God ran everything. So if we wanted to be happy, we had to go to God. The purpose of connecting with, or at least “believing in” God was so that God (whoever and wherever He was – it was so annoying that He always seemed to be invisible) would be more inclined to allow us to have the things that would make us happy. Money, success and love.

Oh yes, you had to be a “good person” too. But the reason you needed to be a good person was so that God would like you and allow you to have the money, success and love that would make you happy.

So to review:

- Life was about being happy.
- The way to be happy was to have money, success and “love.”
- If you were a “good person” and believed in God, God would help you to get those things.

Sound familiar?

All this seemed pretty straightforward and clear to me, so very early on, I started down the prescribed path to “happiness.” I set goals, tried to figure out what I would “be” when I grew up (based not only on whether I liked to do it, but on how much money I could make and how much prestige and admiration I might receive).

I constantly viewed my life as working toward some goal which, when achieved, would mean I had arrived and would live “happily ever after.” The achievement of this goal would determine my value as a person. In other words, I identified myself as those achievements. My life in the present was not important. It was just a path to that future time when I would “have it all.”

I worked hard. I got good grades. I went to college. I was a “good boy.” I met the “love of my life” at age 14 and we were engaged when I was 19. Young, I know, but I felt I was getting ahead of most people, moving more quickly toward happiness than most of my friends who were floundering as to what they wanted to do or whom they wanted to be with. I wasn’t wasting time by trying different things or questioning what I wanted or making “unnecessary” mistakes. I was flying along, checking off the requisite achievements and on the path to the job I wanted (concert pianist), the money I wanted (which would be brought in by the job) and the success and recognition I wanted (after all, I’d be on the stage playing beautifully for people, traveling, being written up in magazines and newspapers, on T.V.). I had the love in place: I was about to marry a beautiful girl who, in fact, was the only woman I had ever been with, giving me an added sense of the purity and perfection of our love. (My parents had had a similar history, which I was emulating.)

In the background, somewhere inside of me, I had a constant sense of anxiety and tension. It could be said that I felt “disconnected,” as though my life was not real. But I just assumed that that was because I hadn’t yet put all the elements of happiness together. I figured if I kept working at it, kept moving forward, the anxiety would go away.



**“I THOUGHT HAVING MONEY,
SUCCESS AND LOVE WERE
THE GOAL IN LIFE”**

CHAPTER 2

OR MAYBE NOT

At the age of 20, I got married. I had looked forward to marriage as the most significant step to achieving lasting happiness. Once that was in place, I would never have to worry about love again, and even if other things didn't go well, I would know that the power of our love would sustain me while I was working toward success and money. I had one element of happiness "in the bag," and given how hard I was working in school (I was still in college) the others couldn't be far behind.

We had a big wedding, lots of friends, lots of presents, and drove off into the sunset to go on our honeymoon.

Three days later I had a complete nervous breakdown.

What happened?!?!

I had just achieved a goal that I had thought would give me a sense of fulfillment and safety, yet all I felt inside was a yawning emptiness and a sense of panic. I found it impossible to practice the piano. All my goals suddenly seemed unachievable, and even if I did achieve them, happiness suddenly seemed to have nothing to do with those goals. I just couldn't be "happy." And on top of that, I began to become painfully aware that I was going to die some day, something from which no achievement could save me. In fact, when I died, all the money, success and love I'd have accumulated, not to mention my body, would disappear. Or at least I wouldn't be there to see them. There was no safety, no way to get control of life or to feel comfortable. Suddenly all the things I thought I could do to ensure happiness seemed meaningless.

Over the next few months, I developed a severe case of agoraphobia, more commonly known as panic attacks. I couldn't go out of the house. The room always seemed to be spinning, my heart pounding, my breathing shallow. I would get dizzy. I would panic.

My life essentially stopped.

Things got so bad that I ended up spending a few months in a psychiatric hospital. Basically, they just gave me drugs that made me crazier than before, but no matter what they did, life seemed totally pointless, and I couldn't seem to move forward.

At a certain point, just because there was nothing else to do, I checked out of the hospital, came home, and began to painstakingly try to rebuild some sort of life. I managed to finish my senior year of college, and began doing some limited private piano teaching for little kids in the suburbs.

At the time, it seemed like this “breakdown” had ruined my life, derailed me from my purpose, and made me unhappy. But in looking back, it's clear that when my life “fell apart,” what was actually happening was that a path was being cleared for me to move in a direction that was my only chance for true happiness. It was as if something in me was saying, “I'm not going to let you continue on this path of working for ‘love,’ success and money, because there's nothing down that path.”

The most important thing about this “breakdown” was that it showed me that there had to be “something else,” some part of the “success formula” that I had overlooked. I had always regarded life as something to be worked on, with goals to be achieved and places that had to be gotten to. (From where I sit today, that seems so effortful and painful, but at the time it was all I knew.) At any rate, I had worked very hard, but somehow all the work had not brought me the happiness, fulfillment and sense of purpose I had sought.

Until this point, I had been working on my life entirely from the outside, but now that that had not worked, I was, in a sense, forced to explore the invisible world of feelings, sensations, and thoughts.

I began writing songs for the first time. These early efforts were not so much about music as about digging into my own feelings and trying to heal myself. When I look back on them now, they seem so self-

indulgent and naïve as to be embarrassing, but they were actually one of the most important steps in bridging the huge gap I had created between my life on the “outside” and my life on the “inside.”

I went into therapy and spent a lot of time working on my childhood. I spent many years being furious at my parents, trying to figure out what they had “done to me” to cause me to feel like this. Although I did a lot of exploring of my feelings, in my mind the object of therapy was to “get rid of” those things that were standing in the way of my achieving the goals I’d set so that I could be happy. Obviously there was something preventing me from succeeding in life, so I was going to find out what that was, get it out of the way, and then I could resume my quest for money, success and “love.”

A lot changed over the next few years. I began to explore what I “really” wanted, who I “really” was, and found that I’d been living a very inauthentic life. I had been studying to be a concert pianist, but in fact, discovered that I had much more interest in pop music and theater. My marriage ended, and although it took another long relationship for me to really figure out who I was, I gradually came to the understanding that I was gay.

I moved back to New York and began to pursue a career in something I felt I really loved, something that I thought would bring me what I really wanted. Theater.

CHAPTER 3

“SUCCESS”

Over the next few years, in conjunction with pursuing my career, I participated in almost every modality of psychology, spirituality and personal growth known to man, and read every self-help book I could get my hands on. In addition to constantly being in therapy, I took EST, one of the first mass-market new thought break-through workshops, attended a Chareeva weekend (a primal scream experiential workshop), meditated, visualized, kept diaries, did *The Artist's Way*, went on retreats, studied various religions, did body work, massage, Rolfing, chiropractic, took megavitamins, in short, tried everything that offered some promise of breakthrough. I would usually get involved with each of these things because they promised to be THE ANSWER.

But the moment I would finish one of these workshops or courses or healing methods, I would be told that in order to REALLY GET THE ANSWER, I would have to move on to the next step. I never did get THE ANSWER from any of these pursuits, but the important thing was that I was acknowledging, for the first time, that there might be more to the world than what I could see. Perhaps there was something in the world I couldn't see that would make it possible for me to get what I wanted in the world that I could see.

I had a great breakthrough in terms of my agoraphobia. With the help of a book called “Hope and Help For Your Nerves” by Dr. Claire Weeks (a book which I had stumbled upon in the library), I came to understand that the only way through panic disorder was to simply experience the sensations involved with it and not try to get rid of them.

One fortuitous Christmas eve (one of the busiest and most frenetic shopping days of the year), I asked my father to drive me down to Macy's in Herald Square in New York City. I got out of the car, stepped into the store, walked through the entire length of the store, head spinning, heart pounding, and had my father meet me at the other end. I had done it! I had experienced my sensations while doing something

frightening, and I hadn't died. At that point, I asked myself, "What if I feel these sensations for the rest of my life?" And my answer was, "So be it."

I now set about doing my life, sensations or no sensations.

I had no idea at the time how important this decision to experience my sensations, rather than trying to make them go away, would be in my later life. But for now, this willingness allowed me to continue my pursuit of the things that I thought would make me happy, albeit trembling and shaking, but at least I could resume going after my dreams.

I achieved a lot. I began to teach, and developed a large private vocal-coaching practice. As time went on, I got jobs playing piano and music-directing shows, Off-Off Broadway, Off-Broadway, and in cabarets around town. A children's show for which I had written the music got produced at a tiny theater in Greenwich Village.

After a few years, I conducted my first Broadway show. Now imagine how challenging it would be for an agoraphobic to conduct on Broadway. Someone who, for years, couldn't even sit in a theater without wanting to run out screaming, was now standing in a confined orchestra pit, committing to conduct for 2-1/2 hours straight without stopping, with well over a thousand people watching. I certainly was still trembling and shaking, but I put a sign on my podium that said "SO DIE!" By this I meant, "Drop dead if you must, but DO NOT WALK OFF THE PODIUM!" And for thousands of performances, I conducted, no matter how I felt, and gradually I began to get used to it and it ceased to be a problem.

I went on to do 5 more shows on Broadway, and this led to my going to Hollywood where I conducted and vocal arranged many of the classic Disney animated movies, including *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *Pocahontas*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and numerous others.

Gradually, I began writing songs that were more, shall we say, suitable for public consumption. I wrote songs about emotion, and about a hopefulness that I didn't always feel, but people began singing them and listening to them, and I became well known as a songwriter.

During this time I also met “the love of my life,” (This one I KNEW was the real thing. The other “love of my life” had obviously been a mistake), and settled into a serious, long-term, committed relationship with a man.

My songwriting led to my meeting singer Nancy LaMott, for whom I produced 5 gorgeous CD’s. I also began composing music for the movies.

The interesting thing about this was that just as had happened in college, although I was achieving a great deal, there was still this nagging feeling that it wasn’t enough, that something was missing. I also noticed that certain “really big” achievements always eluded me. I was making good money but wasn’t wildly rich. I wasn’t winning Oscars or Tony Awards (as some friends I had started out with were). Things often seemed to move forward, but then not get anywhere.

In fact, whenever I would begin to get really successful at something, I would decide that that wasn’t really it, and change careers. I had wanted to be a vocal coach, but when my coaching practice became firmly established, I decided I didn’t want to do that, but rather I wanted to conduct on Broadway. And just as I was becoming a successful Broadway conductor, I decided that I wanted to go to Hollywood. And just when I was becoming a successful Hollywood arranger and conductor, I decided that that was meaningless, and what I really needed to do was write. And as my writing became successful, I decided that I needed to lecture and teach.

Now, from the outside this might look like a career naturally progressing, but my inner experience was that I was not successful and that I had to do something else to get successful. Except I could never stay with anything long enough to be successful. I would always get that nagging feeling and move on. It seemed to me, at the time, that the feeling of emptiness was appearing because I wasn’t successful, but in retrospect, the only time that empty sensation would appear was when I WAS getting successful. This would seem paradoxical, although understanding this would prove to be a major key to breaking through to true enlightenment. But I’m getting ahead of myself.

It would take about 20 more years before I would realize that and have that breakthrough. More about that later.

Suffice to say, beneath the apparent success and creativity, there was still some sense that this was leading nowhere and that I couldn't really have the big things I wanted. And though I would be happy when I achieved something, I always quickly returned to a state where there was something missing, something more I needed in order to be happy. I used to joke that no matter how much money I make, I always make \$200 a week less than I need.

I also noticed that there was always some situation in my life that was creating tremendous upset. The situations would change, but the upset would be the same. Sometimes it would be about money, sometimes about relationship, about a lawsuit or an apartment I couldn't sell, or fear of being sick. As each situation would arise, I would grip, stop off my life, and say, "If I could just solve this I would be totally happy." And then I would solve it and the next situation would arrive and generate the exact same sensations and thoughts.

I stayed in therapy and did a lot of other work in pursuit of that "big breakthrough," that method or that understanding that would allow me to push past my obstacles to manifesting what I wanted to see in the world, and finally get what I wanted and achieve the big dreams that I had.

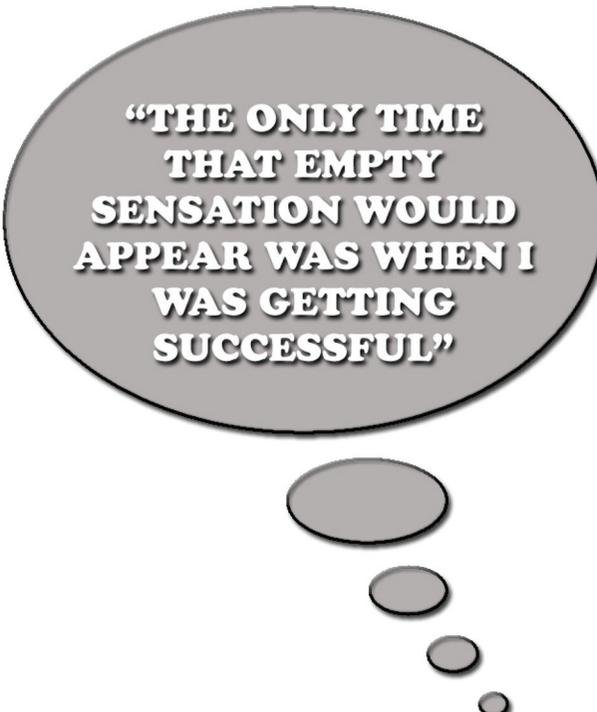
Even with all I had learned about my inner world, the bottom line was that I still thought that it was all about manifesting. Even though no matter what I manifested, I still ended up with the same empty feeling and desire for more, I continued to think that there was some amount of money, some achievement, some relationship that would finally, once and for all, make me happy.

I was determined to find a foolproof way to insure that I could manifest anything I wanted, when I wanted it.

After years of searching, I had a huge breakthrough, and was sure that I had found what I was looking for.

In fact, it was not at all what I was looking for, because ultimately it would not lead me to where I thought I wanted to go. Instead, it would lead me to where I TRULY wanted to go. But I didn't know that at the time, so I was excited at the thought that I had finally found a way to make all my dreams come true.

But again, I'm getting ahead of myself. Before I tell you what that huge breakthrough was, I need to tell you some of the events that led up to it. These events, like my “nervous breakdown” when I was 20, seemed awful at the time but were actually part of a powerful compass that was guiding me to my greatest good.



**“THE ONLY TIME
THAT EMPTY
SENSATION WOULD
APPEAR WAS WHEN I
WAS GETTING
SUCCESSFUL”**

CHAPTER 4

“DISASTER” STRIKES

AGAIN.....AND AGAIN

It was 1995 and I was flying high. I had conducted 5 Broadway shows, was the Music Supervisor of *Beauty & The Beast* Broadway, and I was on my fourth major Disney movie. I had become an award-winning cabaret songwriter, had had a near-hit pop song with Diana Ross, and most gratifying of all, had produced 5 wonderful CDs for perhaps the most extraordinary cabaret singer who had ever lived, Nancy LaMott, and was actually seeing Nancy moving out of the cabaret world and onto the precipice of national stardom. On top of all that, on a personal level, my partner and I had just celebrated our 10th anniversary.

Even with all this, that nagging emptiness still persisted, but I assumed that all I had to do was find a way to have a #1 hit pop song, write my own Broadway musical and get Nancy to stardom, and I would be “home.” After all, what more was there to do? What more was there to life?

Nancy had had Crohn’s disease for nearly her entire life. Although she had amazing powers to triumph and get herself onto the stage no matter what, this disease had always seriously impeded her career. In 1993 she had a surgery that changed all that, and she was finally well. Now nothing could stop her. Or so we thought.

In May of 1995 Nancy came over to my house one afternoon and announced that she had just been to the doctor and that she had Uterine Cancer. She assured me that the doctor had said that it was totally operable and that, in fact, she could wait a few months and finish her latest CD before having the surgery. I was skeptical, but she insisted, so that’s what we did, producing by far the most lavish and most popular of her CDs. The CD came out in November. Nancy died on December 13th.

The world fell apart for me, but since everyone around me who had been associated with Nancy truly fell apart, I had to keep going. I had promised her on her deathbed that everyone in the world would hear her sing, and I was going to do that. My assistant couldn't function and quit a few days after her death. My partner, for whom I had secured the job of manager and director for Nancy, had been appointed executor of Nancy's will, but it soon became clear that he too was non-functional. Even with all this disfunction around me, I had the incredibly good fortune to find a great business manager to run the company. Together, we started to promote Nancy's CDs in a way that led to exponentially greater sales than ever before.

Then, out of the blue, Nancy's family came after us, demanding money and control of the record company. They had never participated in Nancy's career in any way, but being her family, they wanted a say in what happened now that she was gone.

Lawsuits ensued which caused the company to fold. A dream I'd been working on for 8 years was turning to dust. All the money we had made was lost in the legal battle and we had to close up shop.

A few years later, my partner fell in love with a singer I had introduced him to, and left me. I spent the next 3 years alone, unable to get so much as a decent date. It was as if all my deepest fears were coming home to roost.

Why was all this happening? As I said at the end of the previous chapter, only years later, in hindsight, would I realize that like my nervous breakdown when I was 20, these seemingly-disastrous events were not disasters at all, but rather my unerring inner guidance system moving me in the direction I needed to go.

I can hear you asking, "How could these 'outer' events have had anything to do with my 'inner' guidance system?" Good question. You'll have to read on to find the answer to that one.

CHAPTER 5

A BREAK IN THE CLOUDS

Within a few years, I was in the midst of perhaps the biggest depression I had experienced since my “breakdown” when I was 20. I had been alone for 3 years, Nancy was dead, the record company was defunct, I had given up conducting and arranging the Disney movies to write my own music, and although I’d had some successes, I’d had several disappointments where I had done wonderful work and for some reason it had not led my career anywhere.

One day, a friend who was performing on Broadway, and who had sung my song “We Can Be Kind” at an annual charity benefit we always did together, asked me if I had the piano music to the song in his key. He had been invited to sing at Unity of New York, a well-known New-Thought church that often invited Broadway performers to sing at Sunday services, and he wanted to sing my song there. I, in fact, didn’t have the piano part handy in his key because we had performed it with an orchestra at the benefit and I had played for him. But for some reason I heard myself say, “I’ll come down and play for you.” I’d heard about Unity for years and was curious as to what it was like, so down I went.

To my surprise, when they announced my name, I got a standing ovation. Apparently, unbeknownst to me, they had been singing my music there for years and I was well-known to the congregation. We performed the song, it went over beautifully, and I decided that as long as I was there, I would stay for the minister’s talk.

That day changed my life. Something about the new thought principles, about hearing Jesus referred to for the first time in a way that made sense to me (I was Jewish) as someone who was an example rather than a God who was to be worshipped, and hearing about a world of unlimited possibilities based on the way we think, was just what I needed to hear at the time.

I began riding my bike down to the church every Sunday and quietly sitting on the side to hear the weekly sermons. (There was a lot of hugging going on and I felt uncomfortable participating in it.)

A few weeks later, I got a phone call from out of the blue. The message on my machine said, “Hi, This is Britt Hall, the music director of Unity of New York. I’m sticking my neck out here, because we don’t know you very well, but we do know you’ve been coming to church every week, and we were wondering if we could hire you to sing and play at a 5 day retreat we’re doing called ‘Healing Your Heart.’”

Well I didn’t know these people very well either, but I couldn’t resist the synchronicity of that particular subject being brought up, so I took a leap of faith and said “Yes.”

They say that if you say yes, you will always come away with either a good time or a good story. I came away with both.

When I arrived at the retreat, I thought that although, in my head, I wanted to move on, I couldn’t, because my heart was broken. But during the 5 days of the retreat, I learned that your heart can never be broken, because unlimited possibilities always exist, no matter what has happened. I began to realize that it was my head that was broken, filled with thoughts of impossibility and disaster, and in this context, the “outer” world could do nothing but reflect those thoughts.

I didn’t know why, and didn’t know that I was about to have an experience that would set me on the path to my true healing and to my true life’s work, but I could definitely see that my life had turned into an outer picture of what I was thinking inside.

On one of the last days of the retreat, I was sitting in a small chapel by myself, when I suddenly had a change of thought. I found myself thinking, “Wait a minute. Patti LuPone must have auditioned for Cats, but she didn’t get it because Betty Buckley got it. Patti didn’t make the decision, based on that one audition, that she can’t do a Broadway show. She went on to do many Broadway shows.

Why am I making the decision, based on one guy dumping me, that I can't have a boyfriend? I would make someone a wonderful boyfriend. I have a tremendous amount to offer. I'm kind and smart and talented and good-looking."

And at the very moment I had that thought, the door opened, and Shawn Moninger walked in. Shawn was part of the staff of the retreat, a licensed Unity teacher who also was running the sound. I knew him peripherally because he had been the lighting and sound designer at Don't Tell Mama, a club which I had attended from time to time to hear various cabaret singers perform. (I had, in fact, first heard Nancy LaMott sing in that club many years before.) Shawn had not known I was in the chapel when he walked in, and had a look of surprise on his face as he said, "Hello."

Shawn sat down to talk with me, and after about 10 minutes I looked across at him and thought, "This guy is hitting on me. I haven't seen that in years!"

And we've been together ever since.

Shawn later told me that he had been interested in me for the past 5 years, but of course, with the thoughts I was holding, I couldn't see it.

So I had a new boyfriend, and I began to attend Unity regularly and participate in classes and events they had to offer.

I still didn't have the success or money I wanted (and in fact spent my first several years with Shawn deeply questioning the love) but life seemed to be moving in the right direction.

More importantly, the experience of exchanging my thought ("I'm un-date-able" for "I deserve to have a boyfriend") and the immediate appearance of that boyfriend, paved the way for the work and the transformation that would truly change my life in ways I'd never even imagined.

PART 2 THE THOUGHT EXCHANGE
PART 2 THE THOUGHT EXCHANGE

CHAPTER 6

THE THOUGHT EXCHANGE

CREATING THE LIFE YOU WANT
BY SIMPLY CHOOSING A NEW THOUGHT

In 2002, I attended a meeting of the Artists' Support Group at Unity of New York. This was a group that met every Tuesday for the purpose of offering Spiritual Support to Artists. In the group, they would go around the room and each person would state an affirmation about their work or their career.

I was struck by the fact that most affirmations seemed to be more about wishes, hopes and even delusion than about truth or about spirit. People were saying things like, "I am a famous, successful artist and millions of people pay me a fortune to see my work." And I would think, "No you're not. That's not what's happening. That's not true." It seemed as though people were thinking that if they said something strongly enough and frequently enough, and in exactly the right way, that whoever it was who was "out there" giving out such things would hear them and give them what they wanted. I thought to myself, "That's ridiculous. This can't be the way the world works."

In my own "quest for success" I had used affirmations many times. Sometimes they worked. Sometimes they didn't. I had always thought that maybe I wasn't doing them correctly, wasn't repeating them often enough, but as I listened to this group affirming, it became clearer to me that affirmations were, at best, unreliable and unpredictable.

This led me to wonder if there might be some way to go deeper into the truth and find a more practical and reliable way to tap into the infinite resources of the universe and bring about not only results, but an understanding of how and why those results occurred. I wanted to understand what actually went on when we were affirming, to know more about the truth of why affirmation did or didn't work. In short, I wanted to take it from the area of wishing and hoping into the area of living and working with the Truth.

A few months later, I got the chance to explore these possibilities. The leader of the Artists' Circle decided to leave, and in an impulsive leap of faith, not knowing exactly what I was going to do, I asked if I might take over leadership of the group.

I decided that in my exploration, I would only refer to and use what I KNEW to be true, not what I wished was true or what I hoped would be true. Only FACTS. So I set out to examine what I knew to be FACTS.

In the physical world, I know that when I drop a pencil it falls to the floor. So, it could be said that gravity is a fact. I know that in order to be physically alive, people have to breathe, and when they stop breathing they are physically dead. So, "You need oxygen for your body to survive" could also be said to be a fact.

When it comes to things that are less apparently physical, or which have a physical component but also involve processes that we would not consider to be physical, our method of determining what's true may become a little less obvious. For instance, if I really look at the process of how I pick up a piece of paper from the table, I can see that I have to, in some way, have the thought (conscious or not) that I want to pick it up, or the impetus to pick it up, before my body will actually act and do it. I don't know exactly how that thought or impetus gets translated into my picking it up, but I can see the result, so I can see that somehow it does.

Walking across the room would be preceded by wanting to walk across the room (whether I know it or not) or thinking about walking across the room, or being stimulated by something that makes me walk across the room. I don't know why or how, but again, I can infer the truth from the result that I see. So it could be said to be a fact that picking something up or walking across the room is a result of a desire, a thought, or some other stimulus.

There are other things I just know through observation. For instance, in my work as a conductor of orchestras, I notice that when I hear something, my arms move in a certain way, and the orchestra does what I hear.

When I hear the same passage of music differently, my arms move in a different way and the orchestra plays the passage differently. So it could be said that there is a definite cause and effect relationship between what I hear, how my body moves and what the orchestra plays.

There's a very difficult puzzle called the Double Crostic that comes out in the New York Sunday Times every two weeks. I had never been able to come close to finishing one, but one day, about fifteen years ago, a close friend of mine said (in a reprimanding tone) "David, you're a bright guy, there's no reason in the world you can't finish the Double Crostic if you just stick to it." Since that time, I have done every Double Crostic in the New York Times, and have never failed to finish one. For some reason, I KNOW I can do that puzzle, so I always do.

So KNOWING the truth seems to be tantamount to knowing "The Law." There seems to be a certain way the universe works — Certain laws about how things act — Gravity — Breathing — A relationship between thinking, desire and action — How an orchestra gets conducted — How a Double Crostic puzzle gets done. We can't always know how, or why something happens, but we can see, through observation, that certain things are the Law of the universe, "The Way It Is."

The question now became, "What can we KNOW, by observation, to be the truth about affirmation?" Since I was teaching this class at a church, Unity of New York, it seemed doubly interesting to include a spiritual perspective in my "scientific" exploration of how things move from being thoughts, ideas and sensations in the inner world to appearing in the outer world.

When people talk about praying, they often refer to a God who is "out there" somewhere and who is deciding, like a person, whether to give them things or not. But the Bible also talks about how everything has already been given. It's all here for us. "Ask and you shall receive." "Seek ye first the kingdom and all will be given." What does this mean?

If we think about it, everything that could possibly exist already exists in the realm of possibility. We just don't see it yet. Another way of saying this is that everything already exists in the Un-Manifested, waiting

to be revealed. So in spiritual or religious terms, God already made everything, and God has already made it all available to all of us. Some of it we see and the vast majority of it is waiting to be revealed.

Let me give you a few examples. Penicillin was “discovered” in the twentieth century as a way to cure infections. Now what does the word dis - covered actually mean? “Dis” means “un” and covered means hidden. So essentially, we “un-hid” penicillin, or revealed what was already there but unseen. Can you see that penicillin has always existed? It was created at the beginning of time. In the time of dinosaurs, penicillin was already in existence and able to kill infections—it just hadn’t been revealed yet. Even if penicillin wasn’t actually around at that time, the elements that would eventually make up penicillin, the possibility of penicillin, the “cause” of penicillin, had to exist, or penicillin couldn’t be here today.

I’m a songwriter, and when I write a song, am I creating something new? No. That combination of notes and words already exists in the Un-Manifested, I’m just going in there, sorting through the infinite combinations of notes and words that already exist (in possibility) and pulling out that particular combination. When someone’s singing my song, it’s in the Manifested (it has physical form.) As soon as it’s over, it goes back into the Un-Manifested. But now that I’ve “written” it and we’ve heard and seen it appear, we remember that particular combination of notes, and every time someone sings it, it’s re-manifested. In the song *I Write The Songs*, Barry Manilow is not narcissistically talking about himself when he says “I am music. I write the songs.” He’s talking about the original writer of all songs, or God if you will. “I Am Music, and I write the songs.” It’s all written already. In the Un-Manifested. We have the choice about which part of it we want to experience in the Manifested, but it’s all in the Un-Manifested all the time.

So everything has already been created, including us, and we all live in, and are, in fact, part of, the same Great Un-Manifested, filled with all possibilities, every possible thing we could want and not want, every condition, every item, including us. Some of the items are temporarily showing, and the rest are there but unseen. We are among the items that are temporarily showing. At some point, like everything else

that arises, we return to the Un-Manifested, still there in possibility, like a song that has been sung (and perhaps may be sung again) but is just not showing at the moment.

Whether or not you believe in reincarnation, there was a confluence of events that came out of the infinite possibilities that are always present, that caused you to appear, and that confluence could happen again, in a year, or in ten billion years, and you would appear again.

So everything is ALWAYS in the invisible, and the parts of that “everything” that we see are TEMPORARILY in the manifested world.

An image I like to use is that of invisible ink. When you write in invisible ink, you can't see the writing, but it's there. As soon as you shine a special kind of light on it, you see it, it's revealed, it's there. So I began to think, “What is the light that we shine on the Un-manifested to reveal it?” The answer that came to me was.... Thought.

With that answer in mind, I set out to find a way to set up an experiment to see what part thought might play in revealing the life we desire.

THE CIRCLE OF EXPERIENCE

I began by listing the areas of experience present in every human life. I listed them as:

- Thought
- Physical Sensation
- Belief
- Manifestation (the event in the physical world)

That seemed to about cover it. Then I began to explore how they interacted, looking to see what caused what.

You may have noticed that I used the words “physical sensations” rather than the word “feelings.” Some might think that the two are synonymous, or that I'm leaving out the important area of feelings, but the difference between physical sensations and feelings is one of the most

crucial distinctions of this work. In fact, this distinction is the breakthrough that allows us access to complete freedom of thought, which in turn allows us access to complete freedom of experience.

When I say physical sensations, I mean physical experiences such as tightness, hotness, coldness, shaking, sweating, dizziness, weakness. Most of us are not used to describing things that way, but immediately go to what we call feelings: angry, sad, in love, jealous. But in thinking about this, I realized that what we call feelings are actually interpretations of sensations, or put another way, thoughts about sensations.

When someone says “I’m angry” I often ask them, “How do you know you’re angry?” When they explore this, they usually say, “Because I feel a hotness in my face and a tightness in my throat.” But why does that mean you’re angry? That’s just an interpretation of those sensations.

Almost all performers who go on stage experience “butterflies” in their stomach. Some would call the experience terror. Others might call it excitement. Same sensation, different interpretation.

One of my favorite examples of this is: if you told me that you were hot and cold all over, shaking, having trouble catching your breath, your heart was pounding and you felt dizzy, I might ask, “Are you having an orgasm?” This question usually generates a laugh, because most of us sitting in a classroom together would not associate these sensations with an orgasm. We’d be more likely to call them “a panic attack,” which is how we would interpret them if we were experiencing them while speaking in front of a group of people. But the fact is, the sensations involved with an orgasm are exactly the same as those of a panic attack, but in the situation of an orgasm we call them pleasurable, while in the situation of a panic attack we call them dangerous and upsetting.

(It has occurred to me that it might be useful for me to say, “Every time I go on stage I have an orgasm!”) But more about that later.

At any rate, the importance of this distinction, between sensations and feelings, will become clearer as we explore how things move from the invisible world of thought to the visible physical world.

So back to the basics of experience

- Thought
- Physical Sensations
- Belief
- Manifestation

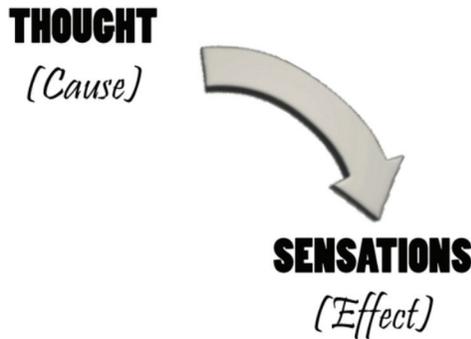
Even though Thoughts are the first thing on the list, I began my exploration by looking at Sensations, since I tend to first become aware of my experiences through sensations. In other words, usually what I notice first is a sensation. This sensation tells me that something is going on, and that's when I begin paying attention. I'm not saying that sensation is the first thing that actually happens. In fact, there are many people for whom sensations are the last thing they notice. As we will find out later, we will often do almost anything to not experience a sensation, if that sensation is associated, in our minds, with something that was painful early in life. But for me, sensations tend to be the first thing I notice.

In thinking about sensations, the first thing I realized was that I have never been able to change a sensation by going at it directly. I have never been able to say, "I won't have my heart pound, I'll have it beat slowly. I won't be short of breath, I'll be able to breathe easily." Although many of us have spent our lives saying "I don't want to feel this sensation, I've got to find a way to get rid of it," in truth, a sensation is a sensation is a sensation. However, I have noticed that when I change the thought behind a sensation, the sensation changes.

So, for instance, if I'm feeling a sensation which I'm interpreting as being angry at someone, and some explanation or new fact comes into the picture, my sensation, and thus my thought of anger, may suddenly disappear. If I'm feeling a sensation that I'm interpreting as being frightened of something, a new piece of information about that thing can immediately transform the sensation, and thus the fear.

Think about that “love of your life” who left you, and how physically miserable you felt. Why? Because you had the thought you couldn’t live without him or her, that your life was over, that you were humiliated. Years later, or even months or weeks later, as you received more information, about how perhaps they were a creep, about how much better another relationship could be, about how you didn’t need them, or about how they actually cramped your style, the sensations associated with them changed. That’s because the sensations were a result of the thoughts you were holding about the person or the circumstance. When the thoughts changed, the sensations changed. (And for those of you who are still feeling those sensations years and years after being left, or hurt, it’s not the leaving or the incident that’s causing your sensations, it’s the thoughts you’re still holding.)

So, if thought has the ability to generate and alter sensations, then we can say, for the purpose of this exploration, that thought is “cause” and sensation is “effect.”



We have a thought, and it generates sensations. An important thing to notice here, is that the sensations will not always “match” the thought. What I mean by this is that you will not necessarily feel “good” when you have a thought that you think of as “positive.” This is another crucial distinction in this work.

You choose a thought, and the sensation simply comes with it, whatever that sensation is.

One of the greatest and most misleading misconceptions in New Thought is that when you are on the right track you will “feel good.” An even greater misconception is that when you get what you want you will “feel good.” The fact is, the way you “feel” (the sensations you experience) relates completely to your history with whatever thought you’re taking on.

For example, if you were a child and you said, “I can do it” and someone slapped you across the face when you said that, any time you think, “I can do it” you are most likely going to feel the sensation you felt when you were about to be slapped across the face years ago. If this is a sensation that you think you can’t tolerate (because it was emotionally and physically intolerable when you were a child with no recourse or ability to escape) the only way you can get away from that sensation, or at least ensure that you will not be in a situation where that sensation might arise, is to exchange the thought behind it (“I can do it”) for a thought that will keep you “safe.” That thought would be, “I can’t do it.” You will now feel “safe” but of course you won’t “do it” since, as we will see, thoughts are the source of all we do and all we see before us.

So thoughts are choose-able and sensations are not. I’m sure it makes sense to you that we have the choice to think any thought we please. We don’t necessarily believe that thought (I’ll get to belief in a minute) but we certainly can think anything we choose. And each thing we think will come with a sensation that may or may not seem to make sense, but which none-the-less, is there.

For instance. I often ask everyone in a Thought Exchange group to take on the thought “I am the most beautiful person in the room.” Even the thought of thinking this thought makes many people squirm, giggle and roll their eyes. But eventually everyone agrees to take it on.

I then ask, “What sensations arise, and what other thoughts arise when you take on this thought?” Some people say they feel wonderful. Some people say they immediately have the thought, “That’s ridiculous. I’m lying.” When I ask them if they noticed a sensation between the first thought, “I am the most beautiful person in the room” and the second thought, “I’m lying,” they always report something like a tight chest, constricted throat or pounding heart. Since these are sensations that they have spent their lives protecting themselves from, it’s interesting to observe that most of the time they don’t even notice them until they’re pointed out. They go right to the thought, “That’s ridiculous.” Can you see that a thought that we might call “negative” actually protects them from experiencing a “disturbing” sensation that is associated, for them, with “I’m the most beautiful person in the room?” It’s in some way perceived as dangerous for them to have that thought, so they immediately exchange it for one that, although seemingly “negative,” is actually safer for them because it keeps them from the sensation that comes with the thought “I am the most beautiful person in the room.”

At this point, there’s almost always someone who asks, “Why on earth would it be dangerous to take on the thought, ‘I’m the most beautiful person in the room?’” Well, let’s think about it. Suppose you were a child who was criticized or even punished for being too “full of yourself.” Or you had a mother or parental figure who was in competition with you. (Remember Snow White and to what lengths her wicked stepmother went to get rid of the competition?) In extreme cases, say, if someone had been molested as a child, the thought “I am the most beautiful person in the room” might actually send them into a panic, because it might come with the idea that it would draw attention to them, and they might associate being noticed or being attractive with being open to molestation. The thought in itself cannot possibly hold any danger, but the physical sensations it creates are deemed dangerous and the person immediately exchanges the thought for a “safer” one, even if the safer thought limits their possibilities.

So we choose a thought, and sensations arise.

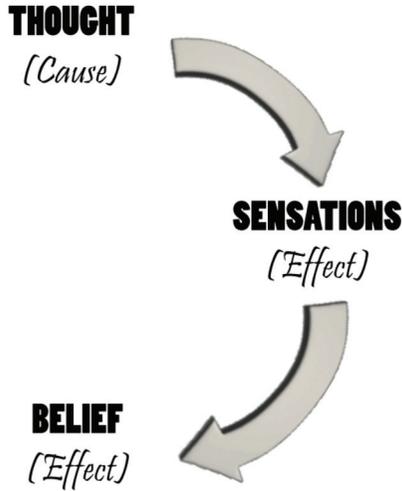
We now have come to another point of choice, perhaps the most crucial, and yet the most overlooked one of all. We can choose to either be with the sensations, or try to get rid of them. Now remember, we can't change sensations directly, so the only way we can attempt to "get rid of them" is to take on a different thought.

This point, right here, is the secret to being able to stay with a thought.

As I said in the introduction to this book, almost everybody knows that when we hold a thought, that thought manifests, but so many of us choose a thought and then become frustrated because we don't see it manifesting. Why? Because we can't seem to stay with that thought and we exchange it away for another. It seems to us that things "happen" that cause the thought "not to work," but in fact, all that happens is that when we take on the thought, we have sensations, and if we don't think we can tolerate those sensations, we exchange the thought away to try to get rid of the sensations. Then, we're living inside the new thought we've taken on, not the original thought that would have gotten us what we'd wanted. And if thoughts cause results, we're seeing the results of the "protective" thought rather than the original thought we took on.

So when we take on a thought and experience a sensation, we are now at a crucial point of choice. To either stay with the experience of that sensation, or try to get rid of it in the only way possible; by exchanging our thought for one that will not produce that sensation. And that thought will always be, "I can't, I won't," etc.

So first let's talk about what happens when we stay with the sensation. When we stay with the sensation, we are able to stay with the thought. And when we stay with the thought, that thought becomes a belief.



Many new thought disciplines use the words thought and belief interchangeably, but in Thought Exchange they have very distinct meanings. In Thought Exchange, we define a Belief as “a thought that you think is true.”

When we take on any thought, we know that there is also another, contrasting thought. In fact, we usually know that there many other possible thoughts which are just as available to us. For instance, if I have the thought, “It’s impossible for me to have money,” I also know that there is a thought, “I can have money.” Neither thought is true. They are just two of the infinite possibilities that exist in the Great Un-Manifested at the same time.

But if I hold the belief that I can’t have any money, I forget that there are other possibilities, and think that it’s a fact that I can’t have any money.

Can you see that by definition, a belief is a lie? A belief is not true because it slices out a small piece of the pie of infinite possibility and says that that piece is the only possibility that exists. When we hold the belief, rather than the thought, that we can’t have any money, we really think that there’s no possibility whatsoever that we could have money.