

MENTAL MECHANICS: A REPAIR MANUAL

Douglas McKee



MYSTIC HOUSE PUBLISHING
Brownsville, Texas
www.mystichousepub.com

Copyright 2007 by Douglas McKee

All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book, or portions thereof, in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, is prohibited without permission in writing from the publisher.



Mystic House Publishing

PO Box 8069

Brownsville, TX 78526

Printed in the United States of America
Illustrations and Cover art by *Emmy's Designs*

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication
(Provided by Quality Books, Inc.)

McKee, Douglas, 1947-

Mental Mechanics: A Repair Manual / Douglas McKee.

-- 1st pbk. ed.

p. cm.

ISBN-13: 978-0-9792440-0-1

ISBN-10: 0-9792440-0-5

1. Thought and thinking--Popular works.
2. Self-actualization (Psychology) I. Title.

BF441.M35 2007

153.4'2
QBI07-600053

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book would be hundreds of pages longer were I to thank everyone who helped lead me, maybe drag me kicking and screaming would be more accurate, to this level of understanding.

It would not have happened without Gloria: wife, soul mate, teacher, and friend, for her constant support and patience while I struggled to understand with my brain what she already knew in her heart.

Many thanks go to my editors, Kathryn Willis and Jo-Ann Langseth, for their art, understanding, and abilities.

I will be forever grateful to all who were so patient with me, knowingly or not; especially my sister Kathryn and children Corry, Codi, Julio, and Emmy, while the tools of *Mental Mechanics* were tried and revised. It is always easier to experiment when you have a captive audience.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

Mental Mechanics: A Repair Manual was originally conceived in 1992. Since then it has been tried, tested, and expanded. It is an instruction manual, so there isn't any of the usual filler that only serves to make books heavier to carry. In fact, every effort has been made to condense it to the essential instructions so they are easier to grasp and use. It will not tell you what to think; rather the focus is on HOW our thinking processes actually work.

Freud's basic conclusion that our thoughts and emotions are automatic and uncontrollable was incorrect to say the least. Had he studied successful people he would have seen that **SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE DO THINK DIFFERENTLY.**

Successful people use five specific thought processes in their area of success that assure success. These same techniques can actually be applied in any aspect of our life and will bring about radical change and improvement.

SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE:

1. Decide what they are going to think about; they choose their thoughts.
2. Watch what they are thinking. If it doesn't make sense, it isn't used to make decisions.
3. Control their negative emotions, at least in the successful part of their lives.
4. Keep their failures in perspective. Failures are seen as bumps in the road, not the end of the road, and
5. Are almost always engaged in what I call goal oriented imagination. They are dreaming, thinking and planning about the future they want to create for themselves.

Mental Mechanics can teach you how to think like they do. The way we think is a habit and habits can be changed if we are serious about wanting to change them. There's a joke that says, "Man's best friend is his dogma." Sad, but true. We take our thinking for granted and that has to change. Thoughts are only tools. We are the Mechanic.

One of our biggest problems in life is that our thinking is almost entirely automatic. We would never pull out onto a freeway and let go of the steering wheel, but that is just what we do with our thinking when we wake up. We almost never question how we come to the conclusions we make, and we rarely doubt them because we usually aren't even aware of what has gone into their making. We would love to be able to think positively, but we simply cannot for very long at a time because we lack the understanding and control of our own thoughts.

By the time we are out of school, our ability to think in a mainly positive way is almost gone. There is simply too much negativity for us to overcome in our environment. The media has so conditioned us to compare ourselves to unattainable goals that we cannot help but believe we come up short personally. We can become excited about short-term goals, but usually lack the inclination and ability to plan our day or see our life unfolding positively.

The sheer number of "positive thinking" motivational speakers available today is amazing. Their messages are great, and their techniques work-- if one can do them! This is precisely the problem. We cannot control our negative thinking long enough to allow the positive thinking to work. We sabotage our own

efforts with our own negativity. When we can identify and decrease our negative thinking, we gain the ability to keep our thinking processes moving in the right direction, and the positive things we want in our lives can begin to happen.

That is the premise and promise of *Mental Mechanics*. To apply it, a small group was formed to open an after-school day care center for truly at-risk kids in the "poor" end of a small farming community south of Houston, Texas. The center was called Neighborhood Islands. The number-one rule was: DO NOT GET ANGRY, no matter what happens. This was because anger, and the fear it engendered, was the reality in which these children lived. No therapy ever works unless it offers an alternative to the current situation.

The center grew, in a period of just a few weeks, from a couple of brave (maybe just hungry) children to 30 to 50 every afternoon. They ranged in age from 7 to 18. The volunteers helped the kids with their homework first, then snacks, then play. Play, for the first couple of weeks, often consisted of breaking up fights and reintroducing the combatants to the rules. Soon, however, there were almost no fights; but play was still aggressive, for boys and girls alike.

In the group of regulars, there were twin boys, age 10. Boiling water had been poured on one as a toddler and he was horribly scarred. The other, although physically beautiful, was horribly scarred emotionally from abuse.

Together they presented us with our major challenge: if one of them wasn't starting a fight, he was rendering assistance to the other

one who had. They calmed down in a few weeks and were, on occasion, even huggable, although both were at first very wary of noncombative physical closeness. We didn't shy away from hugging any of these troubled children.

Behavior changes were noticeable quickly. After about six weeks, we were visited by the principal of the elementary school across the street from the center. She said she wanted to talk to whoever was in charge, and everyone pointed to me. After introducing herself she said, "I don't know what you're doing here, but keep it up! I used to see the twins at least twice a day in my office, and I haven't seen them for almost two weeks now."

Mental Mechanics works, and it works on many levels: individual, family, community, and even larger because the same successful thought processes can be used in any setting to bring about successful solutions. Every aspect of our lives works better when we can think clearly. It gets messed up when we can't, or don't. Good thinking skills are the most important things we can teach ourselves and, by extension, our children.

TABLE of CONTENTS

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1

INTRODUCTION

This is a book about thinking. It is a very important work, and would be so even if I weren't the author. It is important because the human thought process is the most misunderstood and poorly controlled part of our lives, and it creates almost all the negative emotions we have. Negative emotions cause probably 99 percent of all the suffering on the planet. Fear alone destroys more lives each year than all diseases and wars combined. Control through fear is the driving force behind all governments and all but a few religions. Mankind has gone just about as far as possible using systems built on fear, guilt, and dependency.

There is some validity to the old saying, "You can't teach old dogs new tricks." It is not that old dogs cannot learn but; like humans, they just cannot see any reason why they should, so they simply do not. Studies verify this by demonstrating that the likelihood of making significant changes in our lifestyle begins nearing zero as we approach thirty-five years of age. After that, it takes a really traumatic event, such as a near-fatal heart attack, to get us to change.

We need to change our ways, but change is one thing humans don't really do well. Why do we put so much energy into resisting it when change is the true order of all things? What part, if any, does learning play in our lives if that is true? Obviously, the vast majority of humans reach a point in their lives where

they believe they know "enough," whatever that means, and almost everything "new" presented to them after that doesn't get assimilated.

Thankfully, there have always been a small percentage of humans who are wired a bit differently. With those who are so blessed or cursed, depending on their particular circumstances, everything gets questioned. Almost nothing is accepted without rigorous dissection and analysis. I'll bet I drove my parents and teachers crazy asking "Why?" and "How do you know?" No wonder I was offered the "marvelous opportunity" to go to boarding school when I reached high school age.

Eventually, I ended up in nursing school on my way to becoming a nurse anesthetist. When I administered anesthesia for the very first time, way back in 1972, I discovered what real terror felt like. All the disastrous possibilities that could befall my patients filled my mind, and I was sure one of them was going to happen in the next few seconds. After performing a hundred or so anesthetics, my "pucker factor" began to lower a bit, and I realized my patients were more frightened of me than I was of what could possibly go wrong. Giving up mental control is among the most frightening things people can imagine, and that is what anesthesia represents to most of them.

This was a turning point in my practice and, from that moment on, learning how to comfort and support frightened patients became almost as important as administering the anesthetic itself.

I tried numerous approaches to help calm my patients because fear presents itself in so many different ways. I also learned how to

carry on seemingly normal conversations with badly injured, hemorrhaging patients while getting a jillion things ready before putting them to sleep. Holding a patient's hand and gently reassuring him while he drifts off to sleep helps a lot. A surgeon once said I had the best techniques for "peeling patients off the ceiling" that he had ever seen.

I became curious about fear itself because it was the only "thing" almost all my patients had in common. My curiosity was not only about why patients are afraid; but what fear actually is, why it is so powerful, and what, if anything, can be done to alleviate it. The biochemistry of fear is fairly well known but medicine is still dealing with the results of fear, rather than developing methods to help patients become less frightened. Studies at Harvard show that over 60 percent of all visits for healthcare are due to symptoms directly caused, or made worse, by stress.

While researching fear I encountered a statement by Carl Jung. He said he had never met a person with an emotional problem who did not also have a spiritual problem. It occurred to me that maybe the answer to alleviating fear could be found in studying spiritual writings.

I began reading, everything from parts of the *Bible*, the *Torah*, the *Koran*, the *Tao Te Ching* and the *Bhagavad-Gita*, to *Illusions*, *Man's Search for Meaning*, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, and *A Course in Miracles*. I read James Allen, Rumi, Emerson, Gibran, and Thoreau. The list is huge; but as I read and read, a realization began forming within me: All the Masters who walked the earth had actually delivered the SAME Message.

The great works of spiritual literature lead us, sometimes not too gently, to the conclusion that we can only learn what we truly are, by learning what we are not. This thing we call our self, our ego, our personality, is only a collection of our own personal experiences from the moment we are born, and our habitual ways of responding to these experiences. The ego is not who we really are. Our inability to recognize this is the root cause of all our conflicts and negative emotions because we currently believe we are what we feel about what we have done or what we think has been done to us. Our thinking process is faulty, and only when we understand it can we use it correctly.

Everything I read led me to the conclusion that 99 percent of all fear is simply the result of faulty thinking. The reason I believe this to be true is that at least 99 times out of a hundred when I am feeling nervous or afraid, if I look around I am not be able to point to something dangerous. Danger is a real threat that has the potential for actual harm like a car coming at us or a gun pointed in our direction, our house is on fire; things like that.

We do feel fear when danger is present. We feel it because we are mammals and we were born with the "fight or flight" mechanism built in. However, we are the only species that worries constantly when there is nothing to fight and no reason to flee. Worrying about all the things we imagine could possibly go wrong with our lives is what causes almost all of our fears. Stress is the result of our negative emotions, which are all ultimately expressions of fear. The challenge for us is to change our

thinking processes so we do not worry all the time.

Contrary to all the disempowering ads on TV, telling us our lives will be marvelous if we take magic pills for anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, or any of many emotional conditions based in fear, the pills only keep us believing that we are helpless and powerless to change our own lives. We are encouraged to believe the "fix" for everything in our life is external.

The only way to get rid of the fear that accompanies negative emotions is to understand how we ourselves internally create those negative emotions. Once we can see how our thought processes work, we can think in ways that do not create them.

Only when we are able to let go of our automatic sad, scared, or angry soap opera thinking habits can we see our world from a much higher and more inclusive perspective. We can then understand, on a very deep, level that Peace is our natural state and that our life still has the potential to be what we, as children, thought and dreamed it could be.

As its chapters unfold, *Mental Mechanics* can help you to do just that, first by showing how we accumulate, store, and process information as individuals, and second, how we use those processes when we interact with others. In gaining an understanding of our thought processes, we can cease being the slave of our ego and become its master.

