

The 5-Minute Thinking Strategy to Grow Confidence and Courage

The human brain is an amazing and complex organ. It's the control center for our bodies, both physically and emotionally. That's why the Bible cautions to "guard your thoughts because they are the source of true life" (Prov. 4:23, CEV).

Science is constantly learning how the brain works. What we know for sure is that God designed it to be moldable; the technical term for this is plasticity. As I illustrate in the video above, what you see, hear, taste, smell and feel all work to shape your brain, causing you to expect certain outcomes and respond in automatic ways.

This design is brilliant for positive things like learning languages or instruments. But because we're broken people living in a broken world, our brains do the same with the many negative experiences around us.

For example, a person who faced repeated rejection in the past often battles fear of rejection in the future, simply because his or her brain learned to expect rejection. Trauma works similarly, causing people to react to reminders of past pain or even the possibility of experiencing those reminders again.

There are plenty of other examples, but the gist is that the persistent thoughts, feelings and behaviors you hate are likely the results of how your brain was wired by what it experienced in your history.

You Don't Have to Stay This Way

Though negative emotions can be strong, they aren't hardwired

into you. The same design that allowed the mind to be wired for negativity may also be used to rewire the mind for positivity. The Bible calls this mind renewal, which is a process of “[becoming] a new person by changing the way you think” (Rom. 12:2, NLT).

That’s a huge idea, but not just any thoughts can positively change you. It takes consistent thoughts of truth – the kind only found in God’s Word.

“Fix your thoughts on what is true ... Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise” (Phil. 4:8, NLT).

Undoubtedly, many Christians have heard about meditating upon Scripture. But most never actually experience its transformation because they lack a strategy for how to do so.

I’ve been there. For too many years, I used Scripture aimlessly and, therefore, never realized the full power of it to change my life. That’s until God taught me a simple “thinking strategy” founded upon the science and Scripture we just explored.

The 5-Minute Thinking Strategy

To begin, select a time of day that’s best for you. It doesn’t need to be much more than five minutes, but it should be when your mind is most fresh and distraction-free.

Step 1: Read

What consistent emotion or reaction do you battle? Search Scripture for a truth that relates to it. If you need help finding one, use my Shut Up, Devil! app, the index at the back of a Bible or a scripture journal. When you find a related truth, simply read it.

Step 2: Reflect

Here’s the crucial part of the strategy, and what you should

spend the most time on: reflect upon what the Scripture means.

To aid your reflections, I recommend answering three questions:

- 1) What does this truth mean about me?
- 2) What does this mean about God's character?
- 3) What does this mean for my situation today?

Step 3: Rephrase

Using your reflections, rephrase the truth into a personal declaration that you speak aloud. (In the video above, I give an example of what this sounds like.)

Though it might feel strange to do at first, be sure to really say it. The act of speaking truth in a personalized way is what especially helps it stick with you.

Step 4: Repeat

Throughout the day, at the end of the day or both, return to your reflections and your personal declaration. This repetition is what physically rewires the brain by creating new pathways. As the apostle Paul emphasized: "Fix your thoughts on what is true."

Stick with It!

There you have it! The "thinking strategy" that rewires your brain comes down to four simple steps: read, reflect, rephrase and repeat.

Finally, though the process may take you less than five minutes, this isn't a one-and-done kind of solution. The key is to stay dedicated to it for however long it takes to see change. Like repeated negative experiences wired your mind for negativity, it takes repeated experiences with God's truths to rewire your mind to think and react more positively. But with

your commitment and God's empowerment, in time, as you change your thoughts, you'll change your life.

Learn about this strategy by clicking the link:

(Want guidance in the process? I've created a 30-day reflection journal that includes Scriptures alongside prompts that inspire you to see yourself and your situations in positive ways. Check it out at [this link](#).)

Kyle Winkler is the creator of the popular *Shut Up, Devil!* mobile app. His latest book is *Activating the Power of God's Word: 16 Strategic Declarations to Transform Your Life*. Kyle holds a Master of Divinity in biblical studies from Regent University. Connect with him on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Learn more about Kyle by visiting his website, [kylewinkler.com](#).

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