

Why Changing Your Mind Is the Only Way to Truly Change Your Life

Sometimes it's not life that causes us to feel negative and pessimistic but our perspective on what is happening in our life. We can't always control our circumstances but we can always control our thoughts about them. How we choose to think determines how we feel which in turn determines how we live our life overall.

So what might happen if we asked God to help us change our perspective about the current troubles we are facing so we can in turn change our attitude? Although it might be difficult to endure our problems with a smile and optimistic outlook, doing so with great faith results in more positive actions and helps us become stronger, optimistic, and joyful.

As promised in today's Proverbs 31 devotion, **"Three Easy Steps to Transforming Your Mind and Your Life,"** I want to introduce you to a few women who have implemented my three-step strategy shared in the devotion for transforming your thought patterns and who have experienced a significant change for the better in their hearts, minds and lives.

If it can happen for them, it can happen for you too!

Meet Lori

Lori shared with me the battle that went on in her mind for years, and how she used to live with overwhelming fear. As a little girl, she was afraid of her babysitters, teachers, meeting new friends and speaking up in class. As she grew up, her fears morphed into a paralyzing stronghold that affected her entire life. She feared meeting new people, living with roommates in college and even dating. Eventually, Lori's fears

caused her to retreat into her own shell, becoming very shy and withdrawn in an attempt to feel safe, and at times being afraid to leave her home at all. Just before her college graduation, she was raped, and all the accompanying shame, guilt, anxiety and newly heightened fear began to hold her hostage in her own body. She was a prisoner to the thoughts in her head, and they had a strong hold on her life as a whole.

Her negative thoughts influenced her feelings, which affected her life, which negatively affected her happiness.

But thankfully, Lori eventually grew tired of being imprisoned by fear, and one day she made the hard yet life-changing choice to do something about it. She reached up to God and asked Him to help her change her thought patterns and take control of her life. She began doing Bible studies to help her become more confident in who she was and to learn to understand the spiritual weapons at her disposal as a child of God. She began to recognize the mental and emotional prison her strongholds were keeping her in, and gradually learned how to break free from them by reading and memorizing God's Word, spending time in prayer and journaling. She surrendered her fears to God and refused to live a lonely life full of worries and negative thinking. One little step of faith at a time, she overcame the stronghold of fear in her mind and embraced a life with less fear and more joy. Her decision to take control of her thoughts equipped her to take control of her life and her happiness.

Meet Kimberly

Kimberly and her husband tried and tried to conceive a child, but Kimberly just couldn't get pregnant. They even went to a fertility specialist, but after months and months and many unsuccessful treatments, her doctors told her she would never be able to get pregnant. Kimberly was open to adoption, but her husband was not. He wanted his own biological children, and eventually the marriage ended. Not only did Kimberly feel

as though she were somehow less of a woman because she could not bear a child, but the divorce left her feeling rejected and discarded.

In the months and years following, she formed a mental habit of continually telling herself she was worthless. She felt bitter, lonely and sad. The future looked bleak—hopeless. Kimberly struggled for years to push through the pain and unforgiveness, but her thoughts held her captive to negativity and wreaked havoc on her self-esteem and confidence. But as she continued to walk in faith, she invited God to help her transform her mind and renew her thoughts on a daily basis, and He did exactly that.

Over time, God opened her eyes to see that He was giving her opportunities to work with children. He showed her that she played a vital role in helping rear her nieces and nephews. She realized that although she couldn't bear children of her own, she could still pour into the lives of little ones in many different ways. As God transformed her thoughts, Kimberly began to believe that neither her infertility nor the rejection of her ex-husband defined her value as a person, a woman or a treasured child of God. She became determined to think positively about herself and her future. She asked God to help her forgive those who had hurt her, and she began reading His Word, leaning on her faith and seeking after God with all her heart to find the healing and acceptance she longed for. Kimberly intentionally chose to change her thought life from negative to positive, and as a result, she experienced God's peace, joy and blessings.

Her changed thoughts changed her feelings, which changed her life in a brand-new, positive way. Eventually she remarried a godly man who loves her unconditionally. He loves her for who she is, not what she can give him. But please take note of this important fact: Kimberly's life didn't change because her relationship status changed. It changed because her thoughts changed. Toxic thinking will always stand in the way of God's

greatest blessings. In order for Kimberly's life to be transformed, her heart and mind had to undergo a radical transformation first.

Meet Abbey

As a young first-time mom, Abbey found herself struggling with a negative body image. Although she adored her precious new baby boy, the shape and size of her body had completely changed because of pregnancy and childbirth. For months after her son's birth, she felt overwhelmed with negative thoughts and frustrations. It took having a meltdown in a department store dressing room to open her eyes to see that thinking negatively about her body image had become a stronghold and was robbing her of peace and joy in this new season of motherhood. Abbey immediately turned to God in prayer, and He bathed each of her sad, negative thoughts with comforting truths from His Word.

Abbey continued to ask God to transform her thinking about her body image, and her perspective about her postpartum body began to change. She learned to accept that the change in shape and appearance that women's bodies go through during and after pregnancy presents them with a unique opportunity to delight in their function rather than despair over their form. She realized that while her stomach wasn't as firm as it was once, it served as proof of God's answers to her and her husband's prayers for a child. Her hips were wider but formed perfectly according to God's design to give birth. Her face seemed fuller, yet it was no less capable of communicating her joy, delight, empathy and emotion to the little eyes it held captive.

The intentional practice of capturing her negative thoughts and replacing them with truths from God's Word transformed her thinking entirely, freed her from negativity, and enabled her to focus on the joy and blessing of her little one rather than critical thoughts about herself.

Meet Diane

For two years, Diane lived with a man who was an emotionally and physically abusive alcoholic. She finally escaped from the relationship and went to live in a shelter for abused women, but the abuse had rendered her a broken, battered mess, inside and out. Her physical wounds healed, but the wounds from the verbal and emotional abuse lingered, leaving her feeling hurt, resentful, and worthless.

Diane struggled with strong feelings of hatred toward this man who had broken her heart and her spirit. As a result, she became bitter toward all men, even her own brothers. She was afraid to get close to or trust anyone, even God. But after six weeks of intense counseling with godly mentors and teachers in the shelter, Diane moved in with loving family members and slowly began to heal, as God helped her put the pieces of her heart and her life back together. She began reading God's Word and spending a lot of time in prayer. She had been attending church for several months when she heard a powerful sermon about forgiveness that stirred her soul. She practically ran to the altar when the message was over, asking the pastor to pray that her heart would soften toward her abuser and that God would give her the strength and ability to truly forgive. Although it didn't happen instantaneously, Diane's heart did soften over time.

She began to look forward to each new day instead of dreading it. She was excited to be with new friends, learned to trust people again, and allowed herself to believe there were good Christian men in this world. One of those men helped her embrace her value in Christ, and Diane is now happily married to him!

When she forgave the unforgivable, she broke free of the bondage of hatred and stopped the poison of negativity that had been coursing through her veins. When she made the decision to let go of her negative strongholds and anchor her

heart on God instead, His peace took up residence in her heart and happiness filled her days.

These are just a few of the stories shared in the book of real life women who now live as powerful evidence of God working miracles in their lives by changing their thought patterns, not by changing their circumstances.

*To learn more about how you can begin experiencing this transformation in your life too, purchase a copy of Unsinkable Faith: God-filled Strategies for Transforming the Way You Think, Feel and Live by **Tracie Miles**.*