

## **THE MENTAL DIET** – The Ultimate antidote to Jackal Thinking.

This, I can assure you, will be THE most difficult thing you have ever attempted to do in your entire life. Running a full marathon is child's play in comparison. You will probably fail first time round but stay curious. Stay resilient. Don't give up. It was an Irishman, Emmet Fox, who had the brilliant idea of mental dieting.

**The Theory:** What is the theory behind a mental diet? Let's consider a few statistics first. Research says that we entertain up to and beyond 70,000 thoughts a day, many of which are subconscious. That's a lot of thought production, resulting in about 30,000 thoughts per hour and 50 per minute.

Thoughts arise in us as we encounter other people's behaviours or as we meet new situations. They're handed to us through conversation with others, or through the media, social networking and gossip. But how aware am I of what type of thoughts (at least the conscious ones) I'm choosing to entertain on a daily basis? Do I allow my mind to dwell on the negative ones? Can I control my thoughts? Let's investigate.

**The Practice:** So how do we practise a mental diet? This is the hard part. Be prepared for a struggle.

- \* Start listening closely to the chattering voice in your head.
- \* Notice when a thought arrives.
- \* Clearly identify its nature. Is it potentially negative? Is it an emerging Jackal thought?
- \* Once spotted, observe it's presence.
- \* Do not judge it, do not entertain it or dwell on it.
- \* Do not get caught up in it.
- \* In other words, do not believe it, fear it or give it power. Just observe it's there.
- \* Then, ACT immediately. Consider the negative thought as a red hot cinder which lands on your sleeve. Flick it off immediately before it burns you.
- \* Now shift your attention.
- \* Invite a positive thought in. For example, notice what's right about the situation or the person. Think about how you can help or contribute and dwell on that.
- \* Repeat this every time a negative thought sneaks in.

As you practise, you will find yourself up against your formidable pack of internal Jackals trying to sabotage any attempts you make at changing your thinking habits. We're carrying years of conditioning with us which don't take kindly to interference despite all the good intentions we may have.

This practice is strenuous and requires great discipline but don't despair. The biggest problem is remembering to do it in real time. Most of the time we're just not conscious of our own thinking patterns so this diet requires serious mind management. Try it in phases. Try for an hour, then half a day, then a whole day and then seven continuous days, preferably in a relatively stress-free period of your life (holidays?). You will be caught off guard and tempted away from doing it.

But if you persist, the rewards are great. You'll feel lighter. You'll reduce the intake of toxic mental food into your system. You'll be happier, more cheerful. Your life will transform.