

Change your outlook, change your life

It sounds simple, doesn't it? Change your outlook, and you change your life. In reality, however, it isn't always so easy to change your outlook from within that outlook. As Albert Einstein said, "The significant problems we face can never be solved at the level of thinking that created them."

This is the challenge of spirituality — to move beyond common, materialistic worldviews into a greater vision that will create a greater world. You can also call this optimistic approach *higher possibility thinking*, where you're imagining the best of what could be. In many cases, it is your imagination that holds the key to envisioning and creating a more wondrous life (see Chapter 15).

Many spiritual teachers and philosophers, east and west, past and present, have declared that your mind actually *creates* your reality.

Spiritual Wisdom

All that we are is the result of what we have thought.

— Buddha

The act of contemplation creates the thing contemplated.

— Isaac D'Israeli

According to your faith, be it done unto you.

— Jesus (Matthew 9:29)

If you think you are free, you are free. If you think you are bound, you are bound. For the saying is true: You are what you think.

— Ashtavakra Gita

The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.

— James Allen (1864-1912)

Attributing the creation of the outer world to your mind can sound silly, narcissistic, and even ridiculous. After all, if you were in control of this world, things would look very different, right?

Well, this topic is one that you have to entertain and consider without becoming hardnosed about the details. Yes, you're creating the world, and no, you're not creating the world. If you expect spirituality to fit into neat little boxes and labels, then you're going to have a very limited experience of spirituality. Give yourself the freedom to imagine and explore the meanings behind teachings such as, "Your mind creates this world," and, "It is done unto you as you believe."

Don't Forget

In spirituality, you can be divine and limited at the same time. This universe is simultaneously perfect and imperfect, formless and in form, and eternal and bound by time (see Chapter 14).

This theory that your mind is creating your world suggests that:

- **Your limits and obstacles in achieving your goals are exactly what you think they are.** If you think that you have to follow the same path that others in your family or culture have taken, or if you believe that you don't have the ability, resources, or good karma to achieve your deepest heart's desire, then you won't even try to move beyond the limitations your mind has put into place. You may not even begin to consider what your true goals should or could be.
- **Everything you see and know is colored by the glasses of your memories and thoughts.** Some Indian scriptures demonstrate the idea that everything you see and experience is being interpreted through your mind, memories, and thoughts using the simple analogy of seeing a snake in a rope. If you see a plain old useful rope on the ground but think it is a poisonous snake, then your internal experience of fear is the same as it would be if that rope were an actual snake. Your outer actions would also reflect this projection as you stop what you're doing and run away in fear, perhaps never to even discover that it was only a rope.
- **Your destiny unfolds according to the thought-seeds you've planted.** Clear intentions focus your conscious and subconscious mental energies on creating a destiny that reflects your intentions and beliefs. So many famous celebrities and artists tell of making efforts throughout their youth to practice and develop the skills that became their future success.
- **You are who you think you are.** Your thoughts and actions are inherently guided and limited by your self-concepts. If you identify yourself as being a kind and generous person, then you will rise to the occasion to express these qualities in situations that arise in your life. Your expressions of kind and generous qualities through your thoughts and actions are in harmony with the kind and generous person you think you are.

Be Careful

Who you think you are often comes from who others think you are, so unless you use contemplation to discover more about who you really are, you may take on the opinions of others as your own and limit your view of your current and potential greatness through their limited views of you.

- **Changing your vision literally changes the world.** Imagine that! Seriously — imagine it right now!

One Indian scripture goes so far as to boldly declare that “The world is as you see it.” The Sanskrit of this phrase has a nice ring to it, so I’ll share it with you: “*Ya drishti, sa srishti*.” Literally, this phrase means, “As your vision is, so this creation is,” or more simply, “The world is as you see it.”

This phrase doesn’t just refer to some pop psychology, “I’m okay, you’re okay” kind of concept. This “*Ya drishti sa srishti*” means that the world is flexible and inherently molded by how you see it — that your perception is also your reality. This ancient spiritual concept of “the world is as you see it” is also echoed in the science of quantum physics, where scientists have discovered that the very act of observing the world affects what you are viewing. You can find out more about how your mind is a cocreator in Chapter 15.

Be Careful

Be careful not to fall into a guilt trip as you begin to realize how responsible your mind is for all the situations in your life. Along with your increasing awareness of your mind’s power, be sure to include a sense of trust that everything is fine, as you learn and grow in your journey through life.