

Willpower Not Required

How many adverts have you seen on TV which, after saying how fabulous the product is, they say,

"Willpower required"?

I ran an NLP Taster workshop this weekend and one of the major themes was around '**Who is in charge of your thinking?**

To put it really simply your emotional brain, which is the vast majority of your brain, responds far too quickly for you to exercise willpower over it. Willpower is conscious thinking focusing on something specific whereas the vast majority of your thinking happens without conscious thought.

Here is something you can play with to illustrate the point.

Get someone to stand in front of you, feet shoulder width apart, in a relaxed manner then say, "left" and watch what happens. Most people will shift ever so slightly to the left. Then say "right" and watch their reaction. Some people will do something else but that's an entirely different newsletter.

Our brain responds to stimuli incredibly quickly and well before our conscious mind wakes up to try and exercise control.

We respond to tens of thousands of stimuli every day and our body, mind and emotions react to most of these without us even noticing. Think of everything you have seen, heard, felt, smelt or tasted so far today. Your body has processed a reaction to every single one.

Now here is the important bit.

What about all the things you reacted to but were not aware of?

We consciously only notice a fraction of what is happening around us because we simply could not handle all that information, it would be totally over whelming.

So our unconscious mind filters out what it does not think we need and lets us know what it thinks is important. So using willpower to control your reactions is a really tough way to operate because it's not meant for this role.

In other words, when the cigarette gum advertisers say, "Needs willpower" it means that the person who needs willpower in order to quit deep down still wants to smoke. When they think of smoking a part of them says, "Go on, have one!" Of course another part of them wants them to stop and that's why they bought the gum in the first place, but we all know people who have stopped smoking instantly and totally. They didn't need willpower, they just made an absolute decision at all levels of their brain and that was it. They were totally happy to stop.

If you need willpower to do something you want to do then you have a conflict somewhere.

One last point for you to chew on:

Do you ever need willpower to do something you really love doing?

Best wishes

Stephen

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