You have no control over what others think, but you do have the power to control what you think

A reader's question about one line in The Missing Link leads to a close look at what Syd might mean by controlling what we think.

By Brett Chitty

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IN BRIEF

- Two ways of using the same mind means two "conveyor belts" of thought, and we're only ever on one.
- Happiness is a paradigm, a way of using the mind, and any feeling can come in either paradigm.
- We can't control what others think, because only they can use the Principles within them.
- Brett reads "control what you think" as switching paradigms, never choosing which thoughts will arrive.

Drafted with AI and checked by The Hidden Cause. The article itself is as it was written.

> *You have no control over what others think, but you do have the power to control what you think.*
>
> Sydney Banks, *The Missing Link, p. 54* · © The Estate of Sydney Banks

The Context

This began with a fascinating question from Atmos Black via email.

"Since our Zoom conversation, I've re-read The Missing Link, and one sentence tripped me up. I'd love your take on it:

"You have no control over what others think, but you do have the power to control what you think."

The plain reading sounds like CBT (or any positive-thinking methodology) — manage your thoughts. But I assume you and Keith read it differently, because the teaching you're

transmitting doesn't say this.

How do you understand Sydney here? Was the vocabulary fused – the same word doing double duty for the Principle of Thought and personal thoughts? Was he pointing at something I'm missing?

Or did Sydney himself sometimes slip into outside-in language in his writing, even when his own seeing wasn't outside-in?

I'm asking as a genuine question, not as a critique – I sense there's something here I don't yet have."

The fact that Atmos is noticing something "that doesn't add up" is an extraordinary gift. It's a metaphorical tap on the shoulder. It's pointing us towards something deeper – something that, once seen, will reconcile what doesn't yet add up.

I'm going to share another Syd quote – one I think you'll find more familiar – that might help us unlock the one we're going to wrestle with.

> *From sadness to happiness is only one thought away. From happiness to sadness is only one thought away.*
>
> Sydney Banks, *Only a Second Away at 10:39* · © The Estate of Sydney Banks

I struggled with this quote.

I had initially thought of the Three Principles as a conveyor belt of thoughts, with some happy and some sad.

Here's another Syd quote that deepens the puzzle:

> *Thought is the missing link between mental sickness and mental health. Thought is also the missing link between happiness and sadness.*
>
> Sydney Banks, *The Missing Link, p. 54* · © The Estate of Sydney Banks

I assumed the conveyor belt of thoughts goes something like this:
H H S H S S S H S H S S H H S S S etc…
H = happy thought,
S = sad thought.

As Syd also spoke of mental sickness and mental health, I could easily replace H and S with MH (mental health) and MS (mental sickness).
MH MH MS MH MS MS MS MS and so on…
MH = mentally healthy thought,

MS = mental sickness thought.

If this were true, that felt rather depressing to me because there was no way to lead a completely mentally healthy life, given that mental sickness is included on that conveyor belt. Try as I might, there was nothing I could do to prevent it. It was weird that I didn't mind having sadness, but I did not want any mental sickness! People in white coats still scare me! I knew there had to be an answer, but I didn't know where to find it. Was Syd saying that sadness and mental sickness are the same thing? Was I overcomplicating it without even realizing?

Continuing the investigation.

If the idea of a "conveyor belt of thoughts" was accurate, then Syd's quote would have to be incorrect. Because, according to the conveyor belt above, sadness is 3 thoughts away from the current thought we are having. This doesn't match up with Syd's "one thought away from sadness."

In fact, ***any*** design of the conveyor belt of thoughts must contradict what Syd said. If the next thought is a happy thought, then a sad thought must be a ***minimum of two thoughts away***. If the next thought is a sad one, then the ***earliest happy thought is two thoughts away***.

At this point, I wondered if Syd was talking about something else. I certainly couldn't see how Syd could say such a thing, despite my best "racking my brains" efforts. No answer came, so I decided to wait – and hope something would eventually find me. Fortunately, it did, sparked by yet another Syd quote:

> *An important thing to realize is that Universal Mind and personal mind are not two minds thinking differently, but two ways of using the same mind.*
>
> Sydney Banks, *The Missing Link, p. 33* · © The Estate of Sydney Banks

That sounds remarkably similar to what Keith Blevens and Valda Monroe had been sharing – Two Paradigms of Mental Life. Could "Two Ways of Using the Same Mind" and "Two Paradigms of Mental Life" be the same thing? Indeed, I've yet to find ***any*** differences between the two.

At this point, the idea that there is only one conveyor belt no longer makes sense, because paradigms are exclusive. There's nothing from one paradigm that can get into another, and vice versa. If there were a conveyor belt, everything on it would have to remain within its own paradigm.

Since we can have an Inside-Out experience, that means there must be a conveyor belt of

thoughts in that way of using the mind. However, we can also have an Outside-In experience, which must mean there's a conveyor belt of thoughts in that paradigm too!

There are Two Conveyor Belts!

Since nothing from one paradigm can ever cross into another, I realized there must be two conveyor belts running ***concurrently!*** I knew I was learning about Mind in a deeper way than I'd ever known.

This realization brought something into focus: there had been times when I was resilient, finding ways to move forward – and times when I wasn't, caught in a downward spiral. Times when I was able to love, and times when I couldn't, despite my best efforts. Times of genuine mental health, and times of deep internal distress, unable to find the way out of my own suffering.

I must have access to BOTH ways of using the same mind, yet ***I can only be in one at any moment***.

Those difficult times suddenly looked completely different: I had been operating from the very paradigm that was creating the problems – and then, bizarrely, reaching back into that same paradigm for solutions!

I had no idea whatsoever that there was another way to use the SAME mind instead of looking for a mind "outside of my mind," and compassion came naturally simply because I did not know. This is where the "psychological innocence" comes in.

At this point, the realization opened up the possibility that I could just "switch" or "change" my mind. Sydney Banks said on many occasions that all I had to do was change my mind or change my thoughts, and heaven knows I tried and failed every time! Suddenly, after this realization, the next time I heard Syd say, "just change your mind," it meant something far simpler than I had ever envisioned. It was just an ordinary switch from one way of using the mind to another. The simplicity was outrageous.

Ironically, I also realized why I failed to change my mind. I was focused on the content of the thought as if I had the power to do something about it. That alone is enough to ***blind*** me to the paradigms from which the thought emerged. When paradigms become invisible or unknown, we lose the ability to change our minds and therefore remain within the paradigm we are trying desperately to escape!

> *When I recognize mental paradigms, the possibility of changing my mind opens up – rather than being trapped inside those very difficulties as the lens through which I'm thinking.*
>
> Brett Chitty

> *No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it…*
>
> Albert Einstein (possibly)

Suddenly, I heard what Einstein said from a different dimension, an inner dimension. Could he have meant, "no problems can be solved by the same paradigm that created it?" After all, it is illogical and anti-paradigmatic for a single paradigm to contain both the problem and the solution, since they would cancel each other out!

To put it in Syd's language: "no problem can be solved by the same use of the mind that created it."

Keith and Valda's paradigmatic contribution to the Three Principles community truly was a revolution for the ages. They helped us make it easier to experience wisdom that would come to us as "*insights that spontaneously and completely changed their behavior and their lives, bringing them happiness they previously had thought impossible."* (Sydney Banks, *The Missing Link*, page 3)

While Syd did use the term "inside-out", it was Keith and Valda who named these paradigms and popularized these terms – The Inside-Out paradigm and the Outside-In paradigm. These paradigms had their own definitions (or "exemplars") that were uncannily relatable to our life experiences.

Two Conveyor Belts of Thoughts.

With the realization that there could be two conveyor belts – one for each way of using the mind – everything began to fall into place. Every thought in the inside-out way of using the mind is a "happy" one, and every thought in the outside-in way of using the mind is a "sad" one.

We are getting somewhere! At long last, Syd's claim – that we are all one thought away from happiness/mental health, and equally one thought away from sadness/mental sickness – is beginning to make sense!

The Inside-Out conveyor belt of thoughts had this pattern:
H H H H H H H H H H H H…

Whereas, the Outside-In conveyor belt of thoughts had this pattern:
S S S S S S S S S S S…

This perfectly explains that we really are only ever "one thought away" from switching to either conveyor belt – at long last, we have something that is 100% consistent with what Syd had been saying.

This switch is not dependent on circumstances, situations, people, the past, nature, the material world, the form/created, and so on. It's literally ***just one Thought.***

Solving the last problem.

I still had a problem, though. Is it really true that every thought from the inside-out way of using the mind can be a happy one? I know of people who experience upset or "negativity" but still somehow retain their common sense and mental well-being, without any loss of intelligence. They keep their bearings somehow. I wanted to know what they knew!

What is going on here? I've been led to believe that "quality of feelings" was a critical factor in whether I would be resilient, mentally healthy, loving, confident, and so on. Such a belief is not consistent with my own observations of some remarkable people who could handle all kinds of feelings.

"The quality of the feeling is an indicator of the quality of your thinking," and then using that as an indicator or guide to make decisions is, in my view, a ***very dangerous*** belief to adopt. This belief actually makes perfect sense ***if there were only one way to use the Mind!!***

I've been on the receiving end of bullying when I was at school because I am profoundly deaf, wearing hearing aids – an easy target in an environment where I was the only deaf child in a hearing school – and I asked the bullies why they did it; they said it ***felt great***. I knew they were honest in their response. This was a big lesson for me, to the point that I tried to stop myself from feeling positive because I didn't want to risk hurting others. Was there a way to have positive feelings without hurting others? I was missing a huge piece of the puzzle.

There is good news, though. We don't have just one paradigm of the mind. We have two. Two Ways of Using the Same Mind. I had no idea I had underestimated the significance of this, and I still do today.

If there are two ways of using the same mind, and I've only ever known of one, then of course I'm going to be interested to find out more about the other way of using the mind. If there were going to be powerful benefits from uncovering the other way of using the mind, I did not want to miss out on it. This was not a stone I was going to leave unturned.

Not only have I been blessed to discover what I wanted, but I have gotten so much more than I had dreamed of; such is the impact of having insights into the Three Principles.

Feelings are easily misunderstood

Back to feelings. I knew that it was possible to have a positive feeling and be inside-out, and a negative feeling and be inside-out too! Suddenly, the need to feel a ***particular feeling*** just fell off the table. It was such simple logic.

I also realized that it's possible to have positive feelings in the outside-in (yes, really, just like the bullies above), and negative feelings in the outside-in.

This raised such a fundamental question.

> *Would you rather have a positive feeling from the outside-in or a negative feeling from the inside-out?*
>
> Brett Chitty

The answer couldn't be more obvious. That's when I knew: paradigms were where all the action was – not the quality of feelings.

Syd said:

> *Don't be afraid of feelings. Now I don't mean to go around and prove to yourself that you've got feelings. It's nothing to do with outside feelings; it's inside feelings. It's feelings that you know you don't have to go anywhere to find your happiness and that the feeling already exists.*
>
> Sydney Banks, *Heaven Here on Earth at 19:19* · © The Estate of Sydney Banks

Did Sydney Banks say inside and outside? Here we are with paradigms again!!!!

To take things one step further, every feeling comes from a thought. That means the feelings don't come from a paradigm. Every thought on a conveyor belt will have its own feeling. Every feeling – positive or negative – can be experienced either inside-out or outside-in.

This means that a paradigm doesn't stop a person from experiencing the full spectrum of feelings, which led me to another realization.

The Inside-Out and the Outside-In as paradigms don't stop you from feeling the thoughts from each way of using the mind, yet there is no limit on what you can feel in either. Therefore, if "Happiness" and "mental health" aren't about the quality of the feeling, since

the Inside-Out doesn't rule out the wide diversity of feelings, then "Happiness" or "mental health" couldn't possibly refer to the quality of feeling. Most of the world currently lives as if it does.

At this point, given that there are two conveyor belts of thought, one for each paradigm or one for each use of the mind, I realized that "Happiness" and "Sadness" aren't about the thoughts we have, but about which paradigm those thoughts arise from.

A person who has a thought with a negative feeling from the Inside-Out will be "happy" not because of what the thought is or the feeling that comes with it, but because of the paradigm from which that thought emerges.

Talk about an actual paradigm shift!

It's the paradigm that goes deeper than the thoughts themselves. This was the beginning of relating to thoughts in a way that very few people have been able to articulate.

Happiness is not a feeling, it's a paradigm! A Way of Using the Mind!

This also answered the question of whether "Happiness" and "Mental Health" were the same thing, just different names for the same paradigm. Likewise, "Sadness" and "Mental Sickness" were the same thing in different disguises, all because we found a logic that ran deeper than what a feeling could provide.

So, back to that phrase: "The quality of the feeling is an indicator of the quality of your thinking." Now, given what we have been learning, we can factor in the existence of paradigms.

I actually 100% agree with the statement. However, that statement is true in BOTH ways of using the mind.

In the **Inside-Out**, the quality of the feeling is 100% an indicator of the quality of your thinking.
In the **Outside-In**, the quality of the feeling is 100% an indicator of the quality of your thinking.

Suddenly, if you are anything like me, everything about that phrase has been turned on its head, hasn't it? I've yet to meet a client who wants to have ANY thinking in the outside-in, no matter how beautiful or incredible the feeling is!

After several decades, this finally answered the question that had quietly nagged me: why did the bullies say they felt great? What they didn't know was that they were "great feelings from the ***Outside-in***."

Now that I have the direction between Inside-Out and Outside-In, I have the confidence to

feel positive without hurting someone else. All I had to do was go within, and I'm inside-out! Again, it's so simple, but that's exactly what the logic showed me.

Can we control what others think?

Let's go back to Atmos's question. I suspect you can already see where I'm going with this – let's remind ourselves one more time:

> *You have no control over what others think, but you do have the power to control what you think.*
>
> Sydney Banks, *The Missing Link, p. 54* · © The Estate of Sydney Banks

The first part of the quote – ***you have no control over what others think*** – is easy enough. The Principles themselves are neutral (and formless), so they don't determine what we "think." But something is. I'll leave it to you to find out what that might be, as there are many different terms for it. My favorite one, but also the most challenging, is "***That which USES the Three Principles***."

"Free Will/God's Will," "True Self," "Level of Consciousness," "The Thinker," "The Dreamer," are a few of the others I know of. There will be hundreds more.

You won't be surprised I'm adding another Syd quote:

> *It is my belief that life is a cosmic stage. To enable us to play our part in this universal drama, we were given the three special gifts I just mentioned. But keep in mind, these three gifts are completely neutral. It is what you as a thinker do with them that is important.*
>
> Sydney Banks, *The Enlightened Gardener, p. 39* · © The Estate of Sydney Banks

Whatever you go with, all feelings derive from and come alive through the Three Principles. It occurs within. In fact, nobody else but the user can use these Three Principles. I use the Three Principles that reside within me. No one else can use what is within me. Likewise, I cannot use the Three Principles that reside in others.

Therefore, we cannot control what others think. This forms the basis of "Separate Realities," or, as I have also called it, "Individual and Independent Realities."

If we believe we can control what others think, we must reject Separate Realities as a spiritual fact or law. As Separate Realities is a natural implication of the Three Principles, we'd have to reject the Three Principles too.

If the Three Principles are a fact, then we cannot control what others think. Since there is a

1-to-1 relationship between our thoughts and feelings, and no relationship between feelings and anything other than our thoughts, we cannot control what others feel. This is the beginning of maintaining our mental well-being and resilience in relation to others, by refusing to let others' thoughts and feelings determine our own.

Not surprisingly, this includes whether other people are using either of the two paradigms of the mind. This inherent logic of the Three Principles freed me from the grip of needing others to feel positive or be inside-out, and what a gift that has been. I can say without hesitation that it reduced the number of conflicts I had with others by at least 95%. My feelings are so much calmer and steadier when I interact with others, even when they are in distress. Yes, I still get tripped up from time to time, but nothing like as often – and nowhere near as driven to make others adopt my reality!

Can we control what we think?

We have realized there are two ways of using the mind; could this be what Syd is referring to when he says, "We have the power to control what we think?"

I don't think he's referring to controlling ***what*** thoughts we will have, because we would need to know what those thoughts will be before we have them, which, to me, is impossible. How can we know what thoughts we will have before we have them? The thoughts on the conveyor belt would have to already pass through the bridge called the Principle of Thought, so that we can have and know them, and the feelings that come with them.

Could it be that he's referring to which of the two ways of using the mind?

Now that is a much more tangible possibility! Please keep in mind that this is HUGE – again, I am NOT referring to controlling which thoughts or feelings come to us.

We can be inside-out, with no idea what thoughts will come to us.
We can be outside-in, also having no idea what thoughts will come to us.

Valda Monroe once said, "We never know what thoughts we're going to have next." I expanded on that with "We never know what feelings we're going to have next."

Therefore, trying to control what thoughts or feelings we'll get is a futile endeavor.

> *One very important thing to remember is, each and every day we have literally thousands of thoughts going through our heads and believe me, no matter who you are or how perfect you think you are, we all from time to time have thoughts that are good and thoughts that are bad. Many are spontaneous and out of our control to stop. However, the main thing to remember is thoughts on their own are completely neutral and it is you, as a thinker, who puts life into them and the beauty is we are not forced to act on all of them. Only the ones we choose and this ability to choose is what is known as our free will and our free will gives us the authority to change our mind at will.*
>
> Sydney Banks, *What Is Truth? at 01:19* · © The Estate of Sydney Banks

This quote highlights that thoughts are spontaneous, not something we can foresee before they arise in us. The critical factor here is that, rather than preventing "bad thoughts" from coming to us, we retain the right to switch paradigms.

The way I personally see it is this:
"*Good Thoughts*" is another way of saying "inside feelings" or "Inside-Out thoughts." (There are lots more names for this way of using the mind)
"*Bad thoughts*" is another way of saying "outside feelings" or "Outside-In thoughts." (There are lots more names for this way of using the mind)

Everything that we go through will come from a paradigm. Yet we – as thinkers – retain our "Free Will" to switch paradigms. There are no thoughts or feelings from either paradigm that can stop us from moving from one paradigm to the other. It doesn't matter how deep the rabbit hole someone is in the outside-in paradigm; they are still one thought away from being mentally healthy again.

In my view, when we are Inside-Out, we ***ALREADY*** know what we are dealing with – Thought!! We're not dealing with "life," we are dealing with Thought! We are not dealing with the "outside" or the "created." The Inside-Out is an outward projection, and we know its real source – the inside. The inside is identical to the outside.

However, when we are Outside-In, we're still going to have thoughts, but here's the critical part: they won't look like thoughts! The Outside-In is a projection that now appears real, and therefore it looks to us that the source is "out there." This is the separation of the inside from the outside.

Talk about the great illusion, and we treat this illusion as an unarguable fact! It'll look as though something outside us is what's determining our experience. It's a lot harder, if not impossible, to exercise free will over something that appears to be external rather than from

within. Free Will cannot escape the boundaries of Mind, and there's only one place in the entire universe where you will find Mind. This is why Free Will is not found outside, because there is no means for Mind to create an outside, so it can't get there.

In my view, perhaps another interpretation of Syd's quote is this:

> *You have the power to 'control' which of the two ways of using the mind you'll use without knowing what thoughts you'll have, but you have no power to 'control' what others do with their mind, inside-out or outside-in.*
>
> Brett Chitty

If you realize, deep within, what that means, you'll uncover hidden (and wholly unexpected) reserves of mental well-being, resilience, love, confidence, happiness, etc, even as others use their minds to create their own "sadness." After all, we've all done that and been there ourselves, so we can be compassionate to others.

One word of caution, in case we are overdoing or overthinking this:

You still retain the right to agree or disagree with what others think. You can respect what others think, but it doesn't mean "accepting" their realities or giving up your reality for theirs.

Answering Atmos' questions:

"You have no control over what others think, but you do have the power to control what you think."

The plain reading sounds like CBT (or any positive-thinking methodology) – manage your thoughts. But I assume you and Keith read it differently, because the teaching you're transmitting doesn't say this.

How do you understand Sydney here? Was the vocabulary fused – the same word doing double duty for the Principle of Thought and personal thoughts? Was he pointing at something I'm missing?

Or did Sydney himself sometimes slip into outside-in language in his writing, even when his own seeing wasn't outside-in?

> *From behaviorism a multitude of techniques arose. But I can assure you, techniques are to therapists as rituals are to the church. They lead you away from the very truth you seek.*
>
> Sydney Banks, *The Missing Link, p. 92* · © The Estate of Sydney Banks

Sydney Banks was vehemently opposed to using techniques and exercises to manage thoughts, simply because they propagate and perpetuate the Outside-In way of using the mind. The truth you seek will never be found in the Outside-In paradigm. If that sounds a bit negative or blunt, just know that you're still one thought away from being Inside-Out and finding the very truth you seek!

Regarding the vocabulary question:

> *The answer sought is beyond the word. No one can give away wisdom. A teacher can only lead you to it via words, hoping you will have the courage to look within yourself and find it inside your own consciousness… Beyond the word.*
>
> Sydney Banks, *The Missing Link, p. 128* · © The Estate of Sydney Banks

So, instead of analyzing Syd's words, we need to go beyond words. We can listen to the words, but the words don't contain what Syd wanted us to hear, or at least glimpse. The Logic of Mental Life is not found in the words, yet it's clearly discoverable. Syd was a human being. So are we. If Syd can uncover it, surely we can at least glimpse what he saw.

I can't speak for Sydney Banks – that is the law of Separate Realities at work. No one ever truly understood Syd because he alone knew his thoughts and feelings. And I can only ever know mine.

I am incredibly grateful for what Syd brought to the world. He pointed in a direction that no one else could, because he knew what to point to. The transformative power of discovering what's within us cannot be expressed in words. Words are fantastic for communication, and can be used to point in a particular direction – inward – yet words are utterly useless for finding the inner life where happiness and mental health are already waiting for us.

> Sydney Banks's words are quoted with gratitude to his family and estate, who hold the rights to his books and recordings. Please quote him briefly, always with credit, and go to his books and talks for the whole. © The Estate of Sydney Banks

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brett Chitty. Brett Chitty has been profoundly deaf since childhood. He came across the Three Principles in 2011, and soon after meeting Keith Blevens and Valda Monroe in 2015 he saw that his hearing loss had never had anything to do with his mental wellbeing. In 2022 Keith asked him to be his partner in teaching, and Brett is now an equal partner with Mattie Blevens in running The Hidden Cause. In his own words: "I'm profoundly deaf, and I heard. If I can hear, you definitely can!"

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