

2) Garbage & Powerful Ideas

In this section we have placed transparencies that can be used to help participants distinguish the subconscious “garbage” ideas they have internalized from those which we tend to ignore even though they are “powerful.” As critical thinkers we want to get rid of our “garbage” & deeply internalize “powerful” ideas.

“I can’t be
really happy as
long as I have
an unsolved
problem”

Behavior



“Jack is typically angry with other drivers when he is driving. He swears, flips them off, cuts them off, and acts out in various other hostile ways.”



What is the thinking that underlies Jack’s behavior?

**There are powerful
ideas which, when
taken seriously,**



**add a tremendous
amount of quality
to your life**

“Garbage” ideas

vs.

“Powerful” ideas

Powerful Ideas for Students

- “To learn this I must think it through & work it into my thinking.”
- “In my history class I am learning to think historically. I can see how important this is to my life.”
- “To learn well I have to take responsibility for my own learning.”
- “I am capable of learning.
I am capable of changing.”

Believe me,
I would *very*
much like to
foster thinking,
but I have too
much content to
COVER!!

What was the most
“ridiculous” or
“dangerous” belief
you ever had?

What was the
behavior resulting
from your thinking?

Garbage

Other people are responsible for how I feel.



You are making me mad.

Powerful

I am responsible for how I feel



I can change how I feel by changing how I think about things.

Garbage

If I am a good enough teacher, all my students will learn what I want them to learn.

Powerful

Every student is ultimately responsible for his/her own learning. I must create conditions under which my students can learn, but I cannot force them to learn.

What I Can't Change

- I can't control how people will respond to me
- I can't please everyone
- I can't stop people from whining and complaining
- I can't avoid problems
- I can't stop my children from making silly mistakes that cause them pain

What I Can Change

- but I can control how I respond to them
- but I can please myself and those I care most about
- but I can avoid it myself and focus my action
- but I can avoid being dominated by the problems
- but I can make sure that I don't worry about the mistakes they make.

Powerful ideas to foster in student thinking:

I am responsible for the contents of my mind.

I am responsible for fundamental change.

I am not my beliefs.

I am not my ego

I am not my fears.

I am not my prejudices.

I am not everything that is in me.

I am only what is rational in me.

I hereby disown my ego...

and all its pomp!

and all its games!

and all its counterfeits!

and all its insecurities!

and all its tricks!

If knowledge is power,
what is the most
powerful bit of
knowledge you have?



Be specific



How did you gain this
knowledge?

Think
More
Accurately

Think
More
Precisely

Think
More
Clearly

Make
New
Assumptions

Test New Ideas

Consider New Solutions

Get
New
Information

Ask
New
Questions

1) List some of the undesirable behaviors of your students.

2) For each item on your list, spell out the thinking that is producing this behavior.

(Their thinking will almost inevitably be subconscious on their part.)

To discipline our
thinking



We must
develop new
habits of
thinking

Many of the
negative
disempowering
emotions &
desires



are based on
garbage ideas

It is possible
to adopt

Powerful

Ideas

We have all
taken in a lot of
garbage into our
thinking

As humans
we live
in our

Minds

**How
I
think
makes a
difference**

**The quality of
my life
is given in the
thinking
that is guiding
my life**

- Get with a partner. Discuss this statement and its variations.
- State whether you think the statement is true or false.
- What are you basing your thinking on?

We act
everyday
on
ideas
that are
garbage

1) You can't make a flower grow by pulling on it.

- What are the implications of this belief in regard to teaching?
- How would you teach differently if you taught in accordance with this statement?

2) For every problem under the sun, there is a solution or there is none. If there be one, seek till you find it, If there be none, never mind it.

- Is this true?
- If you fully believed and lived according to this, how would your life be different?
- Is this an example of critical thinking?

3) Either you eat life or life eats you.

- What does this mean?
- What would you do more of if you internalized it?
- What would you do less of if you internalized it?

- 1) Define the problem precisely and specifically** (*in order to separate it from other problems*).
- 2) Name the problem** (*to get some clues as to where to look for a solution*).
- 3) Check the problem to ensure that it is something you control.**
- 4) Formulate a possible solution to the problem** (*but think through your possible solution to make sure it is plausible*).
- 5) See if you can think of any alternative solutions** (*think through which is most plausible and least costly*).
- 6) Try out the “solution” that seems best** (*but watch out for garbage ideas creeping in*).

Behavior

1) I give instructions to X. X says he understands



but later it is clear he didn't understand.

2) There is a failure to follow through on what was clearly understood.

Thinking

1) "If what someone is saying to me sounds intelligible, then I understand. I don't have to ask any questions."

2) "I don't have to do anything to remind myself of this. I will automatically remember."

**(1) Find one idea here
that you consider
“POWERFUL”**



**i.e., you want to embody
this idea in your
thinking and behavior**

**(2) Be prepared to explain
what the idea is,
why you think it is powerful,
and what you can do to
begin to work it into
your thinking and behavior**

As a Critical Thinker:

- 1) I recognize that the quality of my life is a function of the quality of my thinking.
- 2) I am learning how to identify the thinking that I am engaging in, especially when I see some problems in my behavior or when I am experiencing unwanted or unproductive emotions.
- 3) I am coming to recognize that I have internalized a number of “garbage” ideas. I am working to replace them with “powerful” ideas.

4) I increasingly draw a clear distinction between what I can't control & what I can control (so as to maximize the effectiveness of my behavior & the fulfillment I experience.)

5) I monitor my strengths & weaknesses regularly, looking for opportunities to build on my strengths & minimize or eliminate my weaknesses.

6) I recognize that I am capable of better & better thinking &

7) I recognize that there is very much more that I have not yet learned about thinking (in general) & my thinking (in particular). I am strongly motivated to learn more & more about my mind & how it operates.

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I am capable of changing”

Garbage

I can't help the
way I am.

Powerful

*I can be other
than I am.
I control who &
what I am & I
am capable of
changing.*

Some day my
prince will
come.

*If I want to meet
a prince I am
asking for
disappointment.
Everyone has
flaws &
shortcomings*

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The quality of my

Life

is given in the thinking that
is guiding my

Life

-
- Find a partner.
 - Discuss this statement and its variations.
 - State whether you think it is true or false.
 - What are you basing your thinking on?

The mind is its
own place. In
itself, it can
make a hell of
heaven or a
heaven of hell.

- John Milton