

# **3 THOUGHTS THAT COULD COMPLETELY TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE**

**A STEP TOWARDS EMOTIONAL  
MATURITY**

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**Three thoughts that can  
completely transform  
your life:  
A step towards emotional  
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## **Preface**

One of the best gifts you can give yourself is changing how you think. Your thoughts influence your feelings and therefore your behavior. If you change the way you think, you will develop emotional intelligence and gain emotional maturity.

Getting in control of your emotions is completely life changing. You worry less about things you shouldn't be worrying about, and focus your energy to things that really matter.

I blog about this and more at [www.thebookofsarah.com](http://www.thebookofsarah.com), why not check it out and see if it is for you?

Sarah.

# Chapter 1

## You are in control of your emotions

**The thought: Don't allow your emotions to control you, instead, take control of your emotions.**

“Our emotions need to be as educated as our intellect. It is important to know how to feel, how to respond, and how to let life in so that it can touch you” -Jim Rohn

Emotions are an important part of our lives. Emotions, whether anger, worry, anxiety, low mood, and sadness do influence how well you live your life. They influence how you react to situations, relate to those around you, become productive in your day or good or bad you feel each day. What do you do about it?

We are emotional beings, and the truth is, we will always experience these emotions. Managing emotions does not mean you lock away your anger somewhere at the back of your mind where you cannot access it. No. It means you experience your anger, but with you in control, not with the anger in control.

Let's take a deeper look at this one common emotion; anger. If someone wrongs you, you have all the right to feel angry. However, how it affects you is really up to you. I realized when I feel angry I get this painful ball at the pit of my stomach. The more I hold onto the

anger, the more it hurts. Anger can result in some behaviors that you will not be very proud of in the end. For example, if you tend to act out when feeling emotional, you may find yourself doing some [emotional spending](#). For instance, anger can drive you to retaliate by bingeing into something, whether it's drinking, eating, or shopping. If you indulge in emotional spending, you spend money on things you don't need simply because you are angry will only leave you broke and more pissed about yourself. Someone once told me that they bought a car simply because someone said something demeaning regarding car ownership, and this person's anger made them buy a car to elevate their feelings. Why allow another person's opinion anger you so much and drive you into debt?

A lot of times we do things we regret out of anger. When you are angry, you are likely to say something hurtful to someone. If you thrash out to your spouse simply because you are angry, you will have caused some damage that cannot be repaired. Remember you cannot take this back; you will hurt this person, and yet you will not be angry forever. This person that you hurt will carry around the hurtful thing you said to them, putting a smudge on your relationship all which could have been avoided had you not be so quick with anger.

Another common emotion is worrying. For a long time, I have struggled with this, which brings about [anxiety](#). I try to talk about anxiety as much as possible, more so as I realized that a lot of us suffer from anxiety but don't talk about it. Worrying can be overwhelming. While I am a periodic worrier, I try to tell myself that worrying will not solve the problem I am in or make the situation any better. If it is within my control, I take action. If it is not, I distract myself so that I don't focus on worrying. I pray, say positive things, do positive

activities, think positive thoughts. I started reading Dale Carnegie's *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* and came across some wonderful lessons that you can apply if you are a worrier.

My favorite of the many lessons I learned from this book was that most of the emotions we feel, such as fear, is all in our mind. If you can do something about a situation, then there is no need at all to worry about it. The time we spend thinking about what we should be doing builds more on our fears. However, when you actually do something, the fear is gone and you don't have to be a slave of that kind of emotion. What you worry about is magnified by your mind, yet it is not as big as you picture it. Once you confront it, you realize that it didn't deserve all the worry you were giving it.

Speaking of distractions, how you distract yourself influences how you will feel after the distraction. If you watch a TV series when trying to get distracted, chances are that you will feel much worse than if you did something positive for distraction such as tidying up. Reading, exercise, or catching up with someone you love are distractions that will leave you feeling much better and worrying less.

Sometimes we feel sad due to our current situation, something that happened in the past, or simply because so much is happening around us that we cannot control. Whatever reason that may be making you sad, dwelling on it only deepens the sadness. Some theories say you must really feel it in order to get past it, but *Emotional Intelligence* author Daniel Goleman disagrees. According to Goleman, if you allow yourself to feel sad, the sadder you will feel and sink deeper into sadness. If you are experiencing a worrying emotion, and



your mind seeks more things to worry about, you will only worry some more and this does not help at all.

Have you ever had one of those days when nothing seems to go right? You wake up late, run into a table with your pinky toe, pour coffee on your clean shirt, find a flat tire, you get the picture. If you believe the day is not going to get any better, it is true, it won't. How your day turns out don't have much to do with the universe, but how your mind is working. In such a day, you are so busy worrying about what else could go wrong in the day, that you lose focus and bump into the car in front of you in traffic. Another thing has gone wrong.

Taking control of your emotions gives you an upper hand over them and therefore an upper hand on how to manage your life. First, you have to develop emotional intelligence. You must first learn how to recognize these emotions in order to know what to do with them and how to deal with them.

Have you ever had such a day where you are really trying to work but can't seem to concentrate? I do this sometimes. I can be staring at my laptop but having wandering thoughts or read the same paragraph 5 times. Other times, I know I need to get something important done, but I keep finding other unimportant things that need to be done so that I don't get down to doing the important thing. All of these are emotional complications.

Understanding what is causing you to feel certain emotions helps you deal with it. By the time I am writing this, the previous night my brother told me some news that I knew would distress my dad. So I had to wait and pray and hope it turns out ok. I realized that during the wait, I was irritable all day, couldn't concentrate at work and had this nagging anxiety /

worry at the back of my mind. When I came to the bottom of it, I realized that this piece of news that was messing up my mood and impairing my productivity. Recognizing this called for a distraction and I buried myself in a book that I had been planning to read for some time (thankfully, I didn't have urgent matters to attend to at the time).

Here, I focused my energy on something that I could control (read a book) as opposed to worrying about something that was not within my control. This is similar to Dale Carnegie's teachings about managing worry whereby he suggests that rather than worry, why not list down how you can solve the situation. If it is not within your control, then distract yourself by doing something within your control.

# Chapter 2

## Don't take things too personally

**Thought: pick your battles, don't concern yourself with every event that takes place, and don't take every action personally.**

"Don't sweat the small stuff.....and it's all small stuff"- Richard Carlson

When you learn to choose your battles, the quality of your life will improve significantly. People will do all sort of things that are not appealing to you, all the time, as long as you are living with others. Whether it is your colleagues, spouse, friend, someone is bound to say or do something that you won't like. Don't go picking unnecessary battles with others. It's not worth your while and your peace.

If your significant other doesn't put his dirty clothes in the wash basket, but on the floor right next to the basket, do you really want to ruin peace by nagging about it for the next three hours? I am not saying you should become a doormat and pick after everyone, but is this the fight you really want to have while more significant matters are more worth any fight?

Not every action by the people around you is intended to hurt you, and not every action should get a reaction from you. Sometimes when people do things you were most likely the last person in their mind. However, when something unfavorable is done, and you make it all about you, this will make you lead such a miserable life feeling like a victim of circumstances. Don't seek to acknowledge and even revenge every kind of wrongdoing that is done to you. You will be surprised how peaceful it is to let some things pass.

- Here are some things not worth working yourself over
- Opinion discussions (religion, politics, sports)
- Stuff said behind your back- leave it there, behind your back
- Other people's business- yes, it is theirs, not yours
- Unnecessary arguments- so they didn't pick your call or call you back? It is nasty, they are the problem, not you
- Social media trolling- don't feel the need to participate in every social media argument
- Relatives drama – there are people who naturally love confrontations, and will always raise unnecessary storms. Unless it directly affects you, avoid family drama, more so if it is exactly that, drama with no solid roots

“You will never reach your destination if you stop and throw stones at every dog that barks”  
– Winston Churchill.

You will not achieve your level of happiness, satisfaction or peace of mind if you concern yourself with every unpleasant event around you. It may seem as if I am encouraging you to

be aloof of what's happening around you, and in a way, I am, unless it is directly impacting your well-being or that of the people you love.

Another angle of taking things too personally is turning yourself into a victim of circumstances. For example, if someone cheated on you, it's very possible that you start questioning what's wrong with you, what you did wrong to lead your partner to cheat. If someone cheated on you, it's not about you, it's them. It's their esteem, insecurities, and inadequacies that led them to do so. Don't beat yourself about it. Even if you checked all the right boxes, they would have still done so. Accepting such facts can free you from unnecessary guilt and self-blame, and therefore from unnecessary stress.

Learning to pick your battles will relieve you so much of unnecessary burdens. Not everything that happens deserves your attention. There are some things you really should let slip by, they are not worth the trouble. I know this may sound as complacency, but really, why work yourself up because your neighbor is playing really loud music, or someone on the lane next to yours is driving like a maniac.

Not taking things personally comes with a lot of inner peace, self-confidence, and self-control. By inner peace I mean that you are so peaceful internally, that is it very difficult for another person to ruffle you up. Some people are so peaceful that they look unbothered or unconcerned. As much as this trait may not be desirable sometimes, for example, if someone is trying to communicate something, and this person seems unbothered, it can be damaging on a relationship. On the other hand, when you are so peaceful, it's very difficult for another person to rattle your inner peace, using external forces.

This brings me to the next element, self-confidence. When you are confident with the person you are, it's very unlikely that someone will say something about you and that will offend you. This comes with a lot of [self-awareness](#). Being self-aware, and self-accepting, means that you know who you are, the good and the bad, you accept yourself as you are, and sometimes, you can even encourage some self-deprecating humor. In this situation, therefore, should someone say something about your actions, you are less likely to take it personally and be offended, because they are telling you what you already know, and you have accepted that's the person you are.

Self-control means that you can see something that you want to get involved in, but you have sufficient self-control to decide that this is not a battle you want to get involved in. self-control means you take a moment to decide if this is a battle you want to fight or not. This kind of control and emotional understanding will save you a lot of unnecessary drama and from bringing up unnecessary arguments.

# Chapter 3

## Cultivate a positive attitude

**Thought: How you react to the events around you is influenced by your attitude. A negative attitude will make you a victim of circumstances, a positive attitude will make emerge from life events as a winner.**

“Possessing a positive attitude is like possessing a secret weapon” -John Maxwell

Your attitude towards everything will change your life. A positive attitude will improve your life incomprehensibly, a negative one will damage your life. When you develop a victim mentality, you become a victim of circumstance. All situations will seem as if intended to oppress you and your irrational thoughts will become even deeper.

Irrational thoughts are such as;

- I always pick the wrong men/women
- I am bad at relationships
- I am not a model employee
- People always cheat on me
- I am not interesting enough
- Bad things always happen to me

- No matter how many times I try I will still fail, why bother?
- Life is terrible and I am terrible at getting things done

All such thoughts are a result of your attitude towards life and such a mentality goes on building onto negative attitudes. The more you think about such thoughts, the more you sink yourself deeper into a hole of self-pity. You see, when something negative happens in your life, such as a job loss, you should be able to differentiate between the event and life itself. Losing your job is an event, not a sign that life is terrible. A good attitude will help you set apart the two, and have optimism that some things just happen, and things can always get better.

If you cultivate a positive attitude, you become more optimistic. You see the possibilities in your life start to increase. There are people who have adopted a bad attitude as a lifestyle. They transform everything that happens to their life as an interpretation that something is wrong with life, instead of determining that something is wrong with the event itself. If you have had a series of bad relationships for example, sure there are some things you could improve about yourself as well as the kind of people you surround yourself with. However, don't let these events change your attitude about the world of dating. Don't let it kill the hope in you that the world is a wonderful place full of wonderful people.

Here is something you can do to change your attitude from negative to positive.

- You can replace 'pick the wrong type' with 'what can I do to have the kind of [relationship I desire?](#)'



- I am bad at relationships- what have I been doing wrong and what can I do to change that?
- I'll fail at this career- I failed that one time, or two times, what did I learn from it? What can I do differently?

A positive attitude will also help you reduce how much you compare yourself with others. The more you compare yourself to others, the more you will be miserable about your life. There will always be people doing better than you, and others not as well as you are doing. In areas that you are winning, there is possibly another person struggling with that which you already possess. In this era of social media, it is very easy to find yourself comparing your life to those of others, the kind that they have posted on social media. What you forget is that people only post their highlights on social media, never their downtimes or shortcomings. So, imagine that you are comparing your whole life with someone else's highlights. You are not being fair to yourself at all. Not everything you see on social media, or on someone's flashy lifestyle is true. They could be struggling with more than you can imagine.

"Comparison is the thief of joy- Theodore Roosevelt

Just like I had mentioned earlier, a bad attitude robs you of appreciation, gratitude, makes you a chaser and not a leader. Try not to compare and if you must, use it to grow. Look at those above you and those below you, what you have achieved and what you could be. Don't judge yourself only on the basis of what you have not achieved but on what you have

achieved as well. Don't look down upon your successes. It may not be as significant and materially rewarding, but remember we define success very differently.

Whenever you realize that you are not feeling so great about yourself, try to remember;

- There are people struggling with some form of addictions and you are not
- There are people who have damaged good relationships with their parents and spouses
- There are people who are deep in debt or stolen to satisfy certain lifestyles

You really must be good for something no matter how low your [self-worth](#) is today. Realizing your self-worth will make you appreciate the person you are and develop a positive attitude towards the future.

A negative attitude will make you live such a miserable life. If you continuously look for all the things that could go wrong in your life, you will always find things that could go wrong. You may have great talent or great opportunities but still, possess a poor attitude. This will hinder you from exploring the opportunities you have, putting your talents into use, and should you happen to explore the opportunities such that they give you success, a poor attitude will surely ensure that you don't enjoy your success at all.

John Maxwell, whose book *Today Matters* has a whole chapter on attitude, gives a perspective that I like to look at. He says, that we hear the phrase 'all's well that ends well', rather than that, why not look at life such that 'all's well that begins well'. The beginning of something sets the pace of how it goes. If you start something with a positive attitude, you increase your chances for success with what you are doing.

Another great thing about positive attitude is that it rubs onto those around you. It is contagious. If you possess a good attitude towards others, they are very likely to have a positive attitude towards you. Even though in life you will meet people who will treat you badly without being provoked, a lot of people treat you the way you treat them. What are the chances you approach someone with a long face, and a bad attitude and expect them to be nice to you? They are very likely to pass back the same vile you are passing onto them. And here is a good thing, if someone treats you badly, and you respond positively with a smile, they become so embarrassed and even apologetic. A good attitude can make another person's day.