

KILLING THE ANTS AND DIRECTING YOUR THOUGHTS

Lesson 10 Guided Notes

DR. AMEN'S 9 ANT SPECIES

- **Always-thinking**: i.e., always/never, no one/everyone, every time/thing
- **Mind-reading**: believing you know what someone else is thinking
- **Blame** on others or situations rather than taking personal responsibility)
- **Focus on the negative**: only see bad in a situation; never see the good
- **Fortune-telling**: i.e., predicting the worst outcome
- **Thinking with feelings**: believing negative feelings without question
- **Guilt-beating**: should, must, ought, have to, etc.
- **Labeling**: self or others negatively
- **All or nothing**: good/bad, black/white



Psychotherapy causes new learning. It enhances neuronal pathways, encourages long-term potentiation that makes learning easier and calms over-firing in the brain. Changes from psychotherapy help remodel the brain.

KILLING THE ANTS

Automatic negative thoughts (based on cognitive behavioral therapy)

- Thoughts are automatic, and every thought releases chemicals.
- Thoughts are based on complex chemical reactions and memories.
- Bad thoughts release chemicals that make us feel bad, while good thoughts release other chemicals that make us feel good.
- Thoughts are often erroneous.
- People don't need to believe every thought they have.
- To feel well, we must take control of our thoughts.



If you don't question your thoughts, your brain believes them and will act as though they are real. Byron Katie's work was based on her understanding that she suffered when she believed her negative thoughts. Thus, she developed the 4 Questions to help others overcome negative beliefs:

- **Question 1:** Is the thought real?
- **Question 2:** Can I absolutely know it is true?
- **Question 3:** How do I feel when I have this thought? How do I behave?
- **Question 4:** Whom would I be without this thought?

Followed by: Is the opposite thought even more real than the original idea?

The **goal** of these questions is not positive thinking; instead, it is accurate thinking.

Dr. Amen's ANTeater technique can kill the automatic negative thoughts. Whenever you feel sad, mad, nervous, or out of control:

- Write down your ANTs
- Label each type
- Talkback to them

Happiness Research

Genes account for 30% of happiness. What counts more is engagement and meaningfulness in life, gratitude, the quality of one's thoughts, and the people's mood with whom time is spent.

STRESS

HYPNOSIS

Hypnosis is a natural form of therapy and only requires a few simple steps:

- Begin with focused relaxation (can have patient focus on a spot on the wall)
- Incorporate deep breathing and progressive muscle relaxation
- Add imagery

Add techniques specific to the patient's issue (i.e., smoking, weight, anger, pain, etc.)

Stress kills brain cells. Some of the best ways to de-stress include:

- Prayer and meditation
- Gratitude
- ANT therapy
- Regular exercise
- Omega-3s
- Deep breathing (diaphragmatic breathing)
- Sharing personal challenges in a small group