

Week 6 Toxic Thinking Patterns WA#2

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Toxic Thinking Patterns

Many scholars in the field of neuroscience are researching the effects of our thinking patterns on our overall well-being. Research reveals that our bodies react to our thoughts with rapid heartbeats and adrenaline rushes (Leaf, 2009, p.55). When toxic thinking becomes habitual, it is especially detrimental. In fact, the effects of toxic thinking patterns have been compared to addictive substances.

Toxic thinking patterns are habitual thinking patterns that cause intensely negative feelings. However, they are like addictive substances because they can also stimulate pleasure. The feelings of pain that result from toxic thinking patterns can serve as a defense mechanism against unpleasant memories or events. Because they are operating in the role of protector, the body perceives them as “pseudo ‘feel-goods’” (Staik, 2011). And like an intoxicating drug, these “pseudo feel-goods” can be addictive in nature. For example, although worry is a toxic thinking pattern, because it results in making the individual “feel good” or feel caring, it can be addictive (Staik, 2011). Bitterness, which is also a toxic thinking pattern, can be addictive because it “helps us avoid feeling our feelings of vulnerability” (Staik, 2011).

Worry and bitterness are just two examples of toxic thinking patterns that can affect an individual in the same way as an intoxicating substance. Because of the addictive element, these thinking patterns can be extremely dangerous. And because of the way that they “fool” the brain, the cycle of toxic thinking can be difficult to break. However, retraining the brain with positive thinking patterns is possible and can relieve the body and mind of the adverse effects of toxic thinking patterns.

References

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