



The Yoga of Mindset Course

Section 1: The First 2 Tools and the Development of Willpower

Lesson 6

Dear Friend,

Welcome to the sixth and final lesson of this first section, *The First Two Tools and the Development of Willpower*. Thank you so much for joining me here for the last three months. Hopefully, you've connected with some part of your lessons every day. This first section is the foundation upon which everything else will be built.

The purpose of this section and course is to give us the knowledge and tools we need to live the life of our dreams. In my experience, it is not possible to create and sustain that possibility without understanding the connection between our thoughts and our moment-to-moment perceptions and experience.

Yet, we can't settle for being someone who thinks they "know" the information. These lessons are not like book-knowledge, and these principles are not like learning a math fact. Reading a lesson once or twice and thinking we "know" it, or memorizing the information, will not help us at all. Nothing in our life will change this way.

That is why I have emphasized that *we have to experience this for ourselves*. No one can do it for us, and no one can "give" it to us, either. This kind of knowledge, the kind that has the power to change everything that we think and see

in each moment, must be experienced to be understood. Then, once we really understand it, we practice it regularly so that it grows inside us. Only then will it have a real impact. *Trust, test, and taste.* These are essential to this course.

Over the last five lessons, we received the first two tools, *Delete*, and *Get the bud. Timing matters.* Bringing these into the different locations of our daily life, we prevent the weeds and negativities of our unwanted thoughts from planting themselves in the garden of our mind. These tools are also excellent for shaping our moment-to-moment experience of life. Still, these two tools are for our thoughts, and cannot remove our hardwired patterns and reactions. Those have deeper roots and a powerful energy all their own which require a different approach that we will learn about and practice in the next section.

You may be noticing that when you improve the kinds of thoughts you allow yourself to think about, you naturally feel better about life. This is because you're using the most basic way life works to help you. *Whatever we think is what we experience in that moment.* There is never a time when this will not be true for us.

When we prove this unchanging principle to our conscious mind enough times, then creating the life we want comes down to one thing: developing the willpower to use it to shape our lives in the ways we choose. Our mind always believes whatever it is thinking in that moment. Until now, we have used this to our disadvantage by zooming in on our worries and what *we don't want to happen.*

We never understood that doing this gives them the energy they need to survive and grow stronger.

The final piece of the puzzle from this first section of the course is our engine. It can make this all work *for* us or *against* us. The one power we all have is free will. **Free will is the power to think what we choose.** Even children can't be forced to think something different than they're thinking at any moment. We're not born with the *willpower* to be able to think ONLY what we choose. As far as most people know, thoughts just happen, and we have to go along with them whether we like what we're thinking or not.

When we practice staying aware of and choosing what we allow ourselves to think about, our free will gets stronger like a muscle. **Developing this power to choose instead of react to what happens makes all the difference.**

We can choose to respond to an uncomfortable situation by complaining about it, and many people will join us in that opinion. Many human beings love to join in complaining and finding faults in others. It confirms what they believe: that everyone should be able to complain as often as they want about anything. They also usually believe that, if they say so, any situation or person is deserving of their criticism.

But by now you know what this does. It sets us up to believe that life is something we should complain about. How can someone who believes in the

power of complaining ever create and maintain anything that is beautiful and lasting?

Perhaps you have had some experience of this in your life. Most of us know at least one person in our lives that unexpectedly blows up in anger, or says things that the whole family wishes had never been said out loud. Living with them, we're always on our guard and walk on eggshells in fear of when the next explosion may happen. We hope it won't, but eventually it does.

When we blame the people around us for “causing” our negative reaction, then they lose trust in us, and we lose trust in ourselves, too. We know deep down that arguing why we were “right” to say and do those things, we are not really telling the truth. [It's just that admitting we're wrong would take SO much courage, and most of us haven't developed the willpower for that \(1\).](#)

This is one reason why we tune in to our lessons every day. They are like an inner voice and a built in reminder that we always have the power to choose differently. Instead of focusing on what we think is wrong with someone, we can choose to look for what *we* said or did that helped to create the difficult situation.

In that moment of making a different choice, of accepting responsibility for knowing how life really works, our life changes course completely. From that point on and as long as we keep choosing it, we're heading in a different

direction from most people on the planet. We're on the way to becoming the master of our destiny.

For example, instead of attacking someone we disagree with, or when we don't like what they've done, we can choose to have compassion for them. We can remind ourselves that they only act that way because they're either unaware that they have other choices, or in that moment they didn't have enough willpower to make a different choice.

One of the amazing side-effects of developing this kind of willpower to think and choose consciously is that it also changes our future. All kinds of things that would have happened to us now begin to move out and away from us. This is because what we are conscious of attracts more of the same. [By training ourselves to refuse to consider what makes us upset or worried, it pulls more of the positive, pleasant experiences that we *are* aware of into our lives \(2\).](#)

Remember that wherever we focus our attention is what we see as true and real. This is why deleting negative thoughts and stopping unnecessary or negative mental conversations has such a positive effect. There are simply fewer worrisome things for us to think about. This doesn't mean that challenging, unexpected experiences won't happen anymore. They will. But because we stop creating more of them, there are now fewer, and our energy goes elsewhere.

Your practice: As past habits arise, notice that we have the chance to either go along with them or to choose differently. **There is a *moment of choice*.** If in that moment, we do not consciously choose a different response, the choice is automatically made for us subconsciously. This means that we will be repeating whatever we did and felt in the past.

The moment of choice is ours. We have the support we need. The lessons will always be here. So, how will it all turn out for us? One thing is certain. It will be however we describe it to ourselves. So, let's train the one who is making up all the descriptions. We are our own sculpture at all times, everywhere.

Your friend,

Mr. Steffen

1) *It's just that admitting we're wrong would take SO much courage, and most of us haven't developed the willpower for that.* ([1 - Return to text](#))

- When we choose this path of willpower and consciously choosing in the moment what it is that we really want, who we really wish to become, one of the benefits is that we are less likely to lose the ones we love along the way.

That negative energy wants to prove everyone wrong. It wants to be the only one who is right, and the last person standing. Of course, this can never work for long in a family or in any relationship based on love and respect.

Then, we fight anyone who says we're wrong. This is the ego in action, and when consumed by a negative pattern, it always sees others as a threat to its survival. If it is in control of us, we will argue and justify why we have every right to react that way, no matter how ugly or difficult our reactions are obviously making life for those around us. We protect and defend the pattern as if it's the most precious thing we have.

2) *By training ourselves to refuse to consider what makes us upset or worried, it pulls more of the positive, pleasant experiences that we are aware of into our lives.*

([2 - Return to text](#))

- This means we carefully study our thoughts within each situation and learn the difference between thoughts that feel good and the ones that make us feel bad. Understanding the most basic way that life works, each and every time we refuse to consider anything that makes us feel bad, everyone wins.
- It does not mean that we ignore our responsibilities. Actually, we are on a path that invites us to grow strong and pure enough to be able to accept responsibility for our every thought, word, action, and perception, and nothing we could ever do is more worthwhile or beneficial for others.
- As I remember my Teacher saying, *When you take responsibility for your actions, you'll smile more. Responsibility makes you feel light, because when*

you take responsibility for your own actions, you don't need to take responsibility for others' actions. This teaching is immensely freeing.

- It also means that we're growing the ability to spot our own selfishness. One helpful guideline is that if it is beneficial to all, it is not a selfish thought or action. Although this may seem challenging at first, eventually it makes life much easier because people come to trust us, because we learn that we are trustworthy. Or in the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "*Self-trust is the first secret to success.*"