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January 2006

Searching for Serenity, Strength and Health?

“High Level Thinking” via Journaling, Meditating and Sharing Can Help

Research on the psychological characteristics of healthy people shows that they are optimistic, have a sense of being able to influence the course of their lives, when confronted with a “bad event”, they are able to “let go and move on”, have a sense of life meaning and a sense of humor. (“high level thinking” patterns)

Research also shows that unhealthy people are hostile and cynical, lack commitment and enthusiasm, feel helpless and hopeless, have persistent negative and pessimistic thoughts, and are unable to deal with their feelings in healthy ways. (Full Catastrophe Living, Kabat-Zinn and Learned Optimism, Seligman) (“low level thinking” patterns)

In Opening Up: The Healing Power of Expressing Emotions, Dr. James Pennebaker shows that when the stress of life is overwhelming, we tend to practice “low level thinking”: punitive inner voices, regressive emotions, self-destructive impulses, and disturbing dreams and memories.

Dr. Pennebaker asserts that the power of “high level thinking” can help us heal overwhelming distress, and the accompanying self-defeating “analysis paralysis”.

“High level thinking” is what we do when we confront our problems with all the emotional and intellectual resources we can muster. Research shows that the disciplines that help us access the benefit of “high level thinking” include journaling, meditating, and sharing with a caring person.

The therapeutic, healing affects of journaling, meditating and sharing are that they help us reach our “high level thinking” by prompting us to be self-reflective and emotionally honest. This, in turn, leads to finding serenity, strength and health.