

Do You Hear What You're Thinking?

What are you thinking? How often have you been asked that question? And how many times have you answered, "Oh, I don't know"? At this moment, you probably are not too aware of the thoughts that are actually affecting your behavior, your emotions, your life. You see, many of our thoughts are so automatic, so subconscious that we are not even aware of them.

It's kind of like riding a bicycle. At first Dad might have said, "Turn the direction you're falling." And in the beginning you might have even verbalized these words audibly, or certainly thought about them as you struggled to keep upright your two-wheeler. But after you gained some expertise very little of your balancing was through through consciously. Instead, you automatically and subconsciously through, Now turn this way, now that way.

Most attitudes and behavior are learned in this way. Your responses to conflict, ways of showing love, your expressions of anger, are all motivated by subconscious self-talk. Some of these subliminal thoughts are constructive and helpful, and positive behaviors result from them. But other subconscious self-talk motives us to engage in self-destructive and other-destructive behavior.

How can all this be helpful? First, be discovering what undesirable thoughts are lurking beneath the surface. Second, by utilizing some promising methods for getting rid of these automatic beliefs. Third, by replacing these mental distortions with eternal truths. Through this three-step process you can help lift yourself out of depression, perfectionism, destructive guilt, rehabilitation stress, and feelings of worthlessness can be dramatically decreased.

As a psychologist I have come to the conclusion that helping people change what they say to themselves is a key in giving them a new perspective. This book revolves around what we tell ourselves in the privacy of our own minds. Revealing these concealed conclusions to ourselves is the beginning of discovering truth that can be life-changing. But this process of puzzling over our conclusions about life is not easy. Redirecting trains of automatic thinking takes some mental exertion. It's hard work. Yet, time after time, I've seen the procedures described in the following pages bring about dramatic changes in people's lives.

Reprinted by permission from *DO YOU HEAR WHAT YOU'RE THINKING?*

By Jerry A. Schmidt. Published by Victor Books. 1983 SP

Publications, Inc. Wheaton, IL.