

What my family and friends were really teaching me was that what we call “reality” is actually our perception. And our perception is unique to each of us. So I began to watch my family and friends with different eyes. Each of us could see the same event completely differently. I also discovered that, from this perspective, forgiving them for having a different perception from me was easy. And my thought dust bunnies started disappearing.

Sharon Carne

April, 2007

Thoughts about Negative Thoughts

In my article, “Thoughts about Thoughts,” I shared some of my experience with watching my thoughts over the past twenty years. As I began to take more responsibility for what I was thinking, I noticed that my life was gradually shifting even more to the positive. But some questions began to form in my mind and they bothered me.

What is thought energy? How does it travel? Are there consequences involved with the negative thoughts? Where does this energy go? Does it have any effect on others? Can this energy be cleaned up? How do we do that?

For most of my life, I understood that my thoughts just hung around in my head. I have taught and performed on the classical guitar for about 30 years. About 15 years ago, I began to explore sending out a specific thought during some of my performances. For example, I would send out the thought or image of the colour blue while I played one of my pieces. It astonished me when I consistently received comments from the audience about how that piece reminded them about sitting by the ocean. It was so blue. Or, that music made me feel so blue. It was obvious to me now that my thoughts were an energy that didn't stop at the edge my skull. They just sailed out from me and, as in the above example, hitched a ride on the sound waves. My old definition of thought just didn't cut it any more. My thoughts obviously had a life outside myself.

I have always been an optimist, doing my best to consistently look for the good in other people. But, I began to wonder about my slip-ups. What about the judgmental, negative or angry thoughts I had sent out to others? Had they received those too? It began to dawn on me that some of these negative thoughts might even be harmful to others. Some of those negative thoughts also carried a pretty strong emotional charge. Now, I was starting to feel pretty badly.

Many of us go through our lives with little awareness of the consequences of our thoughts. I could no longer deny that there are consequences. Fortunately, I found some ways to clean up my own thought dust bunnies.

The first thing that I had to do was to decide that it was important enough to me to make the effort to change these negative thoughts. I was already watching my thoughts, so I was well aware of when the negative ones got stuck in my mind. I made a strong commitment to stop negative and judgmental thoughts.

In a discussion with my kids, I told them that I would never worry about them again. Worry is pure negative thought, usually with an emotional charge. There was no way I wanted to send anyone I cared about energy like that. They said, “thanks, Mom,” probably just to humor me, but I felt better. It wasn't easy to catch and change some of those old ‘worry’ thought patterns. As I caught myself I would stop the thought and immediately replace it with a visualization of perfect health and safety.

Another thing I did was to choose one of my acquaintances about whom I had strong judgmental thoughts. Over the next few weeks, whenever that person came to my mind, I consciously thought about him with feelings of goodwill and friendship. The next time we met, I received a warm friendly greeting and we had a wonderful visit. I was astounded at how changing my thoughts about this person completely changed the experience of the relationship for me.