

DANIEL O'LEARY

the healing habit



1

THRESHOLDS OF THE MIND

*There are hidden powers in your thinking. Befriend
them and they will set you free.*

THRESHOLDS OF THE MIND



Mind your mind. While you are awake you are constantly thinking. Your mind is forever creating the emotions you feel, even the kind of person you are. In fact, you *are* what you think. How you think is the key to your happiness. But because of the depth and stubbornness of your habits of thought, it takes much effort and time to identify, clarify and transform them.

There is another way of thinking, another way of seeing things, another way of living your daily life. You need to believe wholeheartedly that this is possible. Otherwise you won't have the determination, the courage or the motivation to persevere on this challenging new journey. It is a journey of hills and valleys, of light and shadow. Three brave and risky steps forward; two fearful safety-steps back.

But soon you will notice how much precious ground you are covering: each day a little more space, a clearer glimpse of the next step. And your weak and wayward

mental patterns will slowly begin to surrender to the healing habit of your loving attention. Like a devoted mother, an alert guardian angel, you will begin to filter your every thought and feeling, discovering the hidden, negative ingredients that weaken your mind and deplete your energy. With the help of these pages you will quickly become accustomed to this essential, conscious awareness – like second nature. What you are not aware of you cannot heal.

SAMPLE



TWO PATHWAYS – SPIRITUAL VISION AND PRACTICAL STEPS



There are two interweaving pathways to the healing, strengthening and renewal of your life: the way of the soul and the way of the mind. Your soul and your mind are inseparable sisters.

First, the spiritual vision is about the loving trust that makes this transformation possible. It calls for a deep belief that we carry within us an invincible power, a sure conviction that we can make our mind like a faithful companion that will never betray us.

This kind of faith demands calm and constant vigilance. All the major religions carry this belief in their core teaching: that we are all travelling the journey to become very like the beautiful Creator in whose image we are made. This should give us great courage as we embark on the lifelong journey into the mystery of our true and deepest selves, because we will be tempted many times to turn back.

To avoid hopelessness, the daily torment of anxiety, the constant cloud of a restless, draining mental struggle,

you need to believe in another gracious, healing context for your mind's safe thinking, another way of finding a new depth within you and around you. You need to acknowledge your powerful 'hidden self' (St Paul), the presence of an unspoiled and invincible sacred space in your deepest soul, a power and spirit that is the force and fibre of every word in this little book. It lies also at the core of our best healing courses, such as the renowned, non-religious twelve-step programme for those in the grip of addiction. And, as we will see, negative and depressive thinking is a form of addiction too.

This commitment to a deep and spiritual reality within will take you beyond your sporadic efforts, beyond your self-discipline and willpower, your new techniques of thought and your mental adjustments – though all of these will play a significant role as you set out towards your new horizon. There is a more profound backdrop, an inner compass for reaching your 'true north', the new destination for the rest of your life. The healing habit is more than a skill to master, an app to download; it is a beckoning horizon to reach, a lifestyle to adopt, a whole new world to inhabit.

What do I mean by this? I suppose such an understanding could be called a kind of determined trust, a fundamental belief, though you do not need to be 'religious' to possess it. It is what is missing from so many current mindfulness courses. What matters is that you

have some idea of a strong, wise and loving spirit in the mysterious labyrinth of your heart, some notion of an ever-fresh well of life's sweet water within you, purifying, nourishing and energising your mind, your spirit and your body. 'If you keep a green bough in your heart, the singing bird will come to you each morning.' (Celtic wisdom)

SAMPLE



Towton Battlefield, Yorkshire



*The beauty of the world is silently calling for
your attention – ‘Think about me,’ it pleads.*