



**YES
I DID IT!!!**

YES I CAN

YES I CAN

YES I CAN

YES I CAN

The power of positive thinking

You have more control than you think!

by SUE DUMAIS

There may be moments in your fertility journey where you feel you have no choice and that everything around you is spiraling out of control. Although you may feel like your fertility journey is outside of yourself, over time, it can begin to define who you are inside. Many women say that they feel like a failure, feel broken or helpless. What if it didn't have to be so hard? What if you could transform your experience of fertility and move from feeling desperate and confused to feeling inspired and at peace? The good news is you have more control over your experience than you realize. It all begins with creating awareness around your thoughts and beliefs about your fertility and about yourself.

Take a moment to reflect on the dialogue you have in your mind each day. Most people experience a constant chatter in their head. For some, the thoughts come like a storm, fast and furious, while others the pace is slower but still constant. While the pace of our thoughts is important to note, the quality of our thoughts has a greater impact on our lives. Each thought we have is either positive or negative. Positive thoughts can help motivate, inspire and encourage us, while negative thoughts can discourage, confuse and even paralyze us. Are your thoughts mostly positive or negative?

All of our thoughts create a chain reaction. Negative thoughts are generally followed by a negative emotion which is then followed by a negative response in the physical body. For example, the thought “What if I never become pregnant?” will create a negative emotional response such as fear. The feeling of fear often shows up in the physical body as tension (eg. lower belly tenses up or chest muscles tighten). Everything begins with a thought. While becoming aware of your inner dialogue can help, this chain reaction often occurs without our awareness.

Many believe that we have about 60,000 thoughts each day and of those thoughts only 5% are in our conscious mind. That means we only hear 5% of what we are really saying to ourselves each day. The other 95% of our thoughts are an ongoing tape playing in our subconscious or habitual mind. Our subconscious thoughts are much more powerful than the thoughts from our conscious mind. They usually come in clusters that form a deep seated belief. Every day we base our decisions on our subconscious thoughts and beliefs. The key to breaking this cycle is to bring more awareness to our thoughts and beliefs each and every day, and purposefully shift our thoughts to more positive, encouraging and loving ones.

Creating awareness of our thoughts is the first step toward changing our minds, and as we change our minds our experience of life will change as well. I mentioned earlier that we have 60,000 thoughts each day; the good news is that we can only have one single thought at one single moment. One thought will feed into the next and the next and the next, creating the illusion of a storm of thoughts, but you can only have one single thought in each moment. This is great news because all you need to do is begin with the thought you hear, or start with a belief that you want to change. Awareness is the first key!

In my Yoga for Fertility classes I will often use Child’s Pose as an opportunity to reflect on our relationship with self. Many clients are surprised to discover they have so much negative self talk and often their thoughts toward self are

just plain mean. We say things to ourselves we would never imagine saying to another person, especially someone we care about.

When I was younger I hated myself so much that I was my own worst enemy. My inner dialogue was so cruel and hurtful. Imagine having someone whispering constantly in your ear “You are not good enough and you never will be.” Unfortunately many of us acquire these self destructive beliefs from a very young age, and once we collect enough evidence, we consider them our truth. The message then gets stored in our subconscious mind, influencing all our decisions. Creating awareness and identifying your self destructive thoughts and beliefs is the first step to transforming them.

What if you could transform your experience of fertility and move from feeling desperate and confused to feeling inspired and at peace?

I would like you to take a moment and reflect on your inner dialogue.

How do you speak to yourself on a daily basis?

Are you kind to yourself?

Do you speak to yourself the same way you would to your best friend?

Are you supportive and encouraging or are your words harsh, judging and maybe even cruel?

The next step is acceptance. If you miss this step you can easily move to judgment. Adding further judgment will only keep you stuck in the self-destructive cycle. For example, when you hear a negative thought, notice it, accept it and be willing to shift it. Acceptance will dissolve further judgment and allow you to move to the next step which is action.

The most common action step to transform negative thoughts is using affirmations. An affirmation is repeating a word or sentence to yourself over and over again allowing you to replace the negative thoughts with more positive ones. Many people struggle with affirmation and when they don’t see results quickly they get frustrated. It is more than just repeating the words, you need to bring the feeling and invoke the emotion in order to create the shift. Remember

the path → thought, emotion then physical response in the body. When you have negative thoughts you feel “bad.” When you use an affirmation, you need to invite and encourage “good” feelings so that you are in alignment with your positive thoughts. It is in the feeling of the positive affirmations that you allow transformation to occur.

I find gratitude is an easy example to use. I can say the words “I am grateful for my partner” but the words are dead in the water unless I bring the feeling of gratitude into my body. As you repeat the words in your mind or out loud bring the feeling of gratitude into your heart. Imagine a warm feeling of gratitude in the center of your chest. You might visualize gratitude as a colour or an image. Invite the feeling of gratitude deep into your body all the way into your cells. When you allow yourself to feel deep gratitude your energy will shift and you will align your thoughts, emotions with your physical body, and you will “feel” better.

WAYS TO PUT THIS INTO PRACTICE:

1. Choose an affirmation and say it to yourself at least 10 times, invite the “good” feeling into your body. Do this several times throughout the day especially first thing in the morning and before you go to sleep. (eg. “I love my body and trust its wisdom.” “I am a vibrant fertile

woman.” “I choose peace, faith and love every day”). Remember to bring the feeling of the affirmation into your body. Imagine as you say the words that they were true. Imagine how you would feel if your affirmation was true.

2. Say your affirmation out loud or to yourself in the mirror. This can make it more real and create a deeper belief in your statement or words.
3. For every negative thought you hear, replace it with a positive one (eg. “I am such an idiot” can be replaced with “I am doing the best I can”).
4. Remember you don’t need to believe every thought you have, in fact, most of our negative thoughts are based on F.E.A.R. – False Evidence Appearing Real.
5. When you aren’t sure what words to use in order to shift your negative thoughts, ask yourself, “what would I say to my best friend in this situation?”
6. Practice daily meditation to help regain control of your thoughts and quiet your mind. Close your eyes and imagine looking over to the right side of your brain. This is the reflective and creative side of your brain

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which will help you focus on the present moment. The left side of your brain is the busy, analytical side. This right brain meditation has helped many of my clients find peace as they slow their thoughts.

7. Practice gratitude daily! Find one thing about yourself or your life that you are grateful for. Start a Gratitude Journal and each night write 3 things you are grateful for. Remember to invite the feeling of gratitude into your heart and body.
8. To learn more about the power of positive thinking and how to identify and transform limiting beliefs I recommend the following books:
 - The Biology of Belief – by Dr. Bruce Lipton
 - The Big Leap – by Gay Hendricks
 - Excuses BEGONE! – by Dr. Wayne Dyer

Be patient! As you continue to practice positive thinking it will become easier and more familiar. There may be days that will be more challenging and you may find yourself worrying that you have no control over your thoughts. The moment you become aware of your worry, you can take back control. The control comes in your reaction to the situation. The control is in knowing you can choose to react in a positive way or negative. Neither is right or wrong. The negative path is usually more challenging while the positive path is more kind and loving. Either way there are lessons you will learn. The more you practice the more confident you will become. You will come to realize that you always have a choice and no one can take that from you, except YOU. Be your own best friend! Speak kindly to yourself! You deserve it!

About the author

Sue Dumais is the founder of Family Passages Mind Body Studio in Vancouver, British Columbia, where she facilitates programs to support women and couples through their fertility. Sue combines more than 17 years of experience as a fitness expert, yoga instructor, mind body healer and life coach. She is the author of "A Strong Core for Life," and "Yoga for Fertility Handbook." She travels across Canada to teach and lecture on the importance of healing through one's fertility journey. Recognizing the need for more support for fertility clients, Sue has developed a *Fitness Fertility Specialist Certification* and *Yoga for Fertility Teacher Training Course*. A pioneer in her field, Sue's Yoga for Fertility classes, private yoga therapy sessions and "Transforming Your Fertility", a couples' mind-body program, have been instrumental in transforming the fertility experiences of countless women and couples. To learn more visit www.familypassages.ca or call 604-266-6470.