

Becoming your thoughts

By Richard Fowler

I have always been fascinated by thought. What is a thought anyway? Apparently, we have 50,000 of them every day...maybe less for someone like me! But whatever a thought is, we can now use them to control a film!

This first-time film where the plot changes depending on the brain reactions of the viewer had its premiere in June 2018 at Sheffield DocFest. Its real-time plot development is created by your brainwaves: quite literally, you are the director of your own movie. The headset monitors your brain reactions (the firing of brain cells, neurons) and then uses the information to shape the story of the film. For example, depending on your focus, the scenes can be longer or shorter. And there are a staggering one trillion plot combinations for each viewing.¹

This makes me wonder whether there is some reality to this concept, that our thoughts can change the story of our life. Certainly if we go by ancient proverbs, they would seem to attest to this brain-action connection. One wise Middle-Eastern King put it like this: 'for as he thinks in his heart, so is he'.² Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) had a similar take on this connection observing that 'we are shaped by our thoughts; we become what we think'.

You don't have to go far to realise these two had a point. Whether it is the research on mirror neurons, or brain scans of London cab

drivers who have a sizably bigger hippocampus than most people,³ due to having to remember 320 routes around the streets of London, our thoughts have an impact on us.

Thinking the right kind of thoughts, because we want to, or our circumstances mean we have to, will change us and have a positive impact on, not just our lives, but those of everyone we meet.

In contrast, if our thoughts are selfish and unpleasant, they will have a negative effect on ourselves and other people.

You could say we are writing the story of our life with our thoughts. What stories are we writing? Are our thoughts taking us in the direction we want? Let's think about the thoughts we're thinking!

Notes

- ¹ www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/technology-44225476/the-moment-how-your-reaction-changes-this-film-s-plot
- ² Proverbs 23:7 (New King James Version)
- ³ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/london-taxi-memory/>

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