

152. How to Practice Mind Yoga for a More Determined and Resilient Mind

Vanessa 00:00

Welcome to the Empowered brain, the only podcast using science, psychology and coaching to help you rewire your brain and create a life you love with your host, Dr. Vanessa Calderon, a Harvard grad physician, master coach, and mother of two.

My sweet friends, welcome back to the podcast. I am excited to be here with you. Again, you're noticing if you're watching this that I'm wearing this super bright yellow sweater, which I just love so much, because it's just so bright gives me so much energy when I look at it. I also if you are watching this, it's on YouTube. By the way, in case you're wondering, Where do I watch it? I have this really cool necklace or a bracelet. I'm sorry that you can see here it says brave on it. So my daughter, who's amazing, saved up all her money, she is going to be 10. She saved up all her money. And with her money, she bought a bead set to make beading jewelry. And one of the very first pieces of jewelry she made was this bracelet, she made me this brave bracelet and my favorite colors, red, hot pink and yellow. And she made herself a matching one, it was just so thoughtful and so sweet, I thought. So that's what's going on over here.

And today, we're jumping into something that I think is so important, which is Yoga of the mind. And it's something that we talk a lot about in my program, my coaching program called the journey in case you haven't heard of it. It's a coaching program for really smart women, many women of color are in this program. And what we do in there are three things, we help women create more time, create more money, and ultimately create more fulfillment. So they have the freedom to live the life they want to live on their own terms. And it's just a beautiful place to be. If you decide that this is time for you to come on into the program and join this incredible community of smart women, I want you to know that when you join, you get this amazing curriculum, as soon as you join, that teaches you all of these things. So in 12 weeks, you get to learn how to have more time, how to have more money, how to have more fulfillment in life, and ultimately create the freedom that you want. So you can live life on your terms. Plus, you also get lifetime access to support the community into coaching from me directly.

Okay, so we talk a lot in my program, about yoga of the mind. And really what I mean by that is how we teach ourselves to get really comfortable. Living a life sometimes that can feel uncomfortable. So if you are a high achiever setting a big goal for you can feel really good in the beginning. So I'm gonna give you a few examples of how yoga of the mind works. Okay? So again, if you're a high achiever setting a big goal could feel really good. The reason why is, in the beginning, when you set a big goal, what you're doing is you're allowing yourself to dream. And you're using the part of your brain that secretes like the feelings of motivation, which secretes dopamine, dopamine feels great in the body. And so it

feels really good to set the goals. But when you actually start to do the work to achieve your goal, sometimes we get all tied up in the doing, and we slowly start to quit on our goals because it starts feeling hard. And when we, when it starts to feel hard, like it's taking extra effort, we tell ourselves stories, like, I don't have time, or I don't know how. And I use those two examples very specifically, because they're the ones that I hear often all the time. And I realize why.

The reason why I hear this excuse all the time, is because these are the two most common stories that are the most believable to other people, but also to ourselves. Like if I tell myself, I don't have time, I can justify that. If I tell myself, I don't know how I can justify that. Like, I can't do that yet. I don't know how to get a researchable. But more. I don't have time. Yeah, I'll do that later. So of course, those are the two most relatable stories. And they're the ones that we use often. Because it's so much more comfortable to admit or to say I don't have time or I don't know how, instead of admitting the truth, which is I'm afraid to fail, or I'm afraid I'm going to be disappointed or I'm afraid someone's going to judge me, because that's really what's in the way. Really what's in the way of us achieving our goals is being afraid to fail or being afraid of being judged or humiliated or feeling disappointed. And it's funny because I don't know how one is so interesting. It's the one that people want to argue against. Well, both of them I guess people want to argue against that all the time, but I really don't have time you don't understand, or I really don't know how. But really, honestly, you can find a blueprint for almost anything on YouTube or on Google. So really not knowing how it's something that, you know, anytime you tell yourself that excuse, I want you to ask yourself, Is this really true? Because it probably is not. All right.

So if that's the case, how do we work to actually achieve our goals when things get hard. And this, my friends, is where yoga of the mind comes in. So what is Yoga of the mind? So when we set goals, and we feel really good in the beginning, inevitably, we know that the negative stuff is going to come up, negative emotions are going to come up, like fear of judgment, like I mentioned earlier. For me, it's often a lot of self doubt or insecurity. It could be imposter syndrome, it could be fear of humiliation, all of those things that come up. And when things like that come up for us, our brain latches on to them like Velcro, because like, one of my favorite neuroscientists uses this analogy, which I love so much. He says, your brain is like Velcro for the bad stuff, the bad stuff just sticks to your brain and doesn't let go. And it's like Teflon for the good stuff, the good stuff just slips away. Why is that because our brain as you all probably know, if you've been listening to this podcast for a while, our brain has a negativity bias. We are wired for survival, which is great because it's kept the human species alive for so long. But it's also not so great anymore, because it keeps us now in a life of playing really small, which is not what I want for any of you.

Because my goal in life is to help as many women and as many people of color, do big, beautiful, audacious things in the world and have more time, more money, more fulfillment, and ultimately more freedom to live life on their terms. So what happens? So there's one thing I do every time I set a goal, to make sure that I can move past those uncomfortable negative emotions. And again, that's yoga at the mind. So how do I know that I'm going to need yoga the mind? How do I know that these negative emotions are going to come up? Well, I know because when I am intentionally choosing to constantly stretch myself to constantly figure out things like, what else is possible for me, what else can I achieve? You know, I What else is possible in my marriage? How much more intimate and beautiful? Can we make it? What else is possible in my relationship with my kids? What else is possible? In my exercise

routine? What else can I do? What else is possible in my business, I am constantly asking myself and stretching. And I know that I have the human brain. And because I have a human brain, I know the negative stuff is going to come up for me. And so remember that everything we do, is driven by those emotions, whether they're positive or negative emotions, everything we do is driven by them. So I've reviewed this a few different times.

But there's this cognitive thought model that dates way back to the Stoics, a long time ago, even before that, I'm sure, but they're the first recorded record of the cognitive thought model. It's the basis for cognitive behavioral psychology, and I talk about it a lot throughout this podcast. So when you think about the cognitive thought model, what it tells us is that any thought we have is going to lead to a feeling. And that feeling leads to all of our actions, and our actions ultimately create our results in our life, or our goals in our life. So if you think about your feelings, driving your actions, and your actions, ultimately creating your results, then your feelings really, ultimately create your results in the world. And your feelings are coming from your thoughts.

So if your feelings can either propel you forward, like motivation, determination, excitement, or they can keep you stuck, I can have security, guilt, shame. It's really important to know, what are the emotions that keep you stuck? And what are the emotions that propel you forward? And the best way to do that, is by first thinking of the emotions that get you stuck. So this is how I do the mind yoga. Because when I think mind yoga, what I'm really thinking is, how do I continue to stretch my mind, like yoga? I do yoga of my body all of the time? How can I continue to stretch my mind to reach new levels of potential? And so I'm going to walk you through what it is I do. And if any of this resonates with you, please take it and practice it for yourself. So the very first thing I do is I go ahead and I create my goal, what is the goal that I want to achieve? And then I list out all my actions because I know the actions I need to take. And then I think about what feelings are gonna get in the way.

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So for me, those feelings tend to be self doubt. Those feelings tend to be insecurity. But those feelings tend to be disappointment. And those feelings tend to be like fear of being judged. Those are the things that get in the way for me, and again, I know they're gonna get in the way. Because even though my brain has this tendency to tilt towards positive and optimistic and like I have an optimistic brain, I still have a human brain, which will always offer me thoughts and feelings that want to keep me safe. And feeling disappointed, insecure, feeling self doubt, that is not in the bucket of safety. That's the other bucket of not feeling safe. And, you know, not putting myself out there is what my brain wants, because when I put myself out there, it's scary brings up all these emotions. And what your human brain wants to do is it wants to expand the least amount of energy possible.

And guess what? Achieving big things is counter to that. It's counter to the human brain's motivational triad. What's the motivational triad? Rest as much as possible, seek pleasure and avoid harm, and it's achieving the goals is countered to that. So what I do intentionally to make sure I don't get stuck there is I stretch my brain by first coming up with what are those emotions that are going to get in the way. So again, I mentioned for me, it's disappointment, insecurity, self doubt, fear of being judged fear of being humiliated. So I come up with those emotions. And then I come up with the plan. I think about those emotions. Think about the thoughts that create that for me, you're not good enough, you don't have

what it takes whatever else that comes up for me. And then I think, Okay, well, if those feelings if those thoughts and feelings are going to come up unintentionally, which means I don't have to plan for them, they're already going to come up.

What can I plan to think and feel intentionally? What are the feelings that I can plan to feel intentionally to help me stretch my brain stretch my mind, to keep me in a place of resilience so I can keep moving forward. So my recommendation to all of you is to also come up with your plan of thoughts and feelings that you're gonna choose to think on purpose. So I'm going to share mine. And if they resonate with you, please feel free to borrow them, and add on your own add on the ones that really speak to you. So the emotions that I choose to think on purpose are courage, responsibility, commitment, and determination. And as a bonus, I add on accomplishment, like a sense of accomplishment and pride for the work that I've done. So how does this show up for me? So, for me, I choose to feel courage on purpose. And the way I feel it is, I know, things are gonna get uncomfortable. I know when I feel insecure and feel discouraged, that I need to lean into an emotion. And so I purposefully cultivate courage by thinking thoughts on purpose. And those thoughts are, for example, this feels really uncomfortable, but I'm gonna take the action anyway. And that leads me to take action in the face of discomfort, which is courage, right taking action in the face of fear.

Or sometimes I feel discouraged because I feel like I'm behind if I'm comparing myself to someone else. And so I remind myself, I have to start somewhere. I know this is uncomfortable, or I know I feel behind, but I have to start somewhere. And that helps me feel courage and allows me to take action. Responsibility for me is a really interesting one. Because I really do feel like it's my responsibility to live my purpose. I really do feel like my grandmothers, my great grandmother's, they would in a lot of passion, a lot of work. And they really devoted their lives to make sure that my mom had better opportunities. And my mom devoted her life to make sure I had a better opportunity. And all of them my grandmother, my great grandmother, my mother, I come from this incredible lineage of women that were committed to improving their communities, and to be in service. And I really do feel like it's my personal responsibility, my purpose on this earth, my dharma, to be in service to my community, to lift up my community to lift up women and people of color. And so responsibility is a big one I lean into, I tell myself, like when it feels really uncomfortable for me to take action.

I remind myself, Hey, I owe it to my grandmothers, I owe it to my mother, I owe it to my community to keep going. And I lean into responsibility, which really supports me in taking action. This is a really big one. Because when you shift into the world of entrepreneurship, there's a bunch of new skills you have to cultivate that you don't need when you're necessarily an employee. And a big one is having to put yourself out there to remote. You're the stuff that you're you know, putting out there like for example, for me, it's the journey. It's my incredible program that I love. So I imagine, I hold so dear to my heart. And I have to put myself out there to make sure that other people know that it exists. And I remind myself, hey, it's my responsibility, I owe it to my grandmothers, to my mother, to my community, to make sure people know that this program exists. And that sense of responsibility really lends itself to the second one or this third feeling, which is commitment.

]So, commitment is a big one. For me, I feel like I was born with discipline. So I feel really blessed that I feel like I have a brain and a body that leans towards self discipline, and commitment, I feel like I have

commitment and discipline is something I was born with. But for me, Commitment means that once I set my mind to something, I don't quit until it's done. And it serves me really well in when I set goals, because I remind myself, hey, I can do this, Hey, we said, we're gonna do this, we're gonna do this. But when I also think about responsibility, it reminds me how important it is for me to continue to be committed to my goals. And so for me, what some of the thoughts I tell myself to lean into commitment is,

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I am helping women and people of color, break wealth, break success, break happiness, break freedom barriers, I'm helping them close those gaps that exist, those gaps that exist because of systems of oppression that have existed way before our time. And part of my purpose on earth is to help women close those barriers, help people of color, close those barriers, really break those barriers. And that really supports me leaning into commitment. It's the same thing with determination. So courage, responsibility, commitment, and determination. I'm committed to making this work. It's my responsibility to go out there to support my community to uplift women and people of color. And I'll do it even when it's uncomfortable. That's courage. And I mentioned this bonus one, the bonus one I remind myself off and I practice a lot is the sense of pride or accomplishment. And what I do, I've said this before on this podcast, but I make sure to really take time to let it go when I've achieved a milestone or something big, even when it's just the end of my day. At the end of my day, before I transition from work to family time, I pause and I just let myself have like 2030 seconds to let in everything I created. And to just feel that sense of gratitude, that sense of accomplishment.

It really is this beautiful sense of pride. And what that does for me, is it fuels me to continue to create because I get to really take in that good. It feels like a beautiful feeling at the end of my day. So those are the things that I practice regularly. So what does practicing look like? So practicing looks like you know, so for example, I have all of those thoughts and those associated feelings written out for me, like I'm looking at them right now. They're on this notebook right next to me. And it's right here at my desk. So practicing looks like in the morning, when I get up and get ready to work, I'll just look at what I wrote. And I'll read it all. And I'll let myself really feel those positive feelings. That's what it looks like. Sometimes what it looks like is I choose one of the thoughts or one of the feelings that I really want to cultivate for the week. And I'll put it on a post it note and put it on my computer. So I see it every day. For example, if it's courage, I say, I'm going to take action, even when it's uncomfortable.

Or if it's my responsibility, I'll put I owe it to my ancestors, my grandmother's, my mother, my community, to continue to move forward to keep taking action. So that's what it sort of looks like. Another one that I used to do a lot that I don't anymore, but I'm going to share this with you in case it really supports you is I use the app think up. It's called Think up. And I used to use this all the time, I still do occasionally. But what the app does is it allows you to record your voice saying a thought a mantra, a feeling. And you can play it back for yourself. So you hear your own voice with this thought and it really helps you practice those thoughts and make those thoughts around. So you can the app I think is free with I think some in app purchases. But I think you can get everything you need in the free version.

So it's called Think up in case you're interested in looking into it. So when you start to do this, what starts to happen is you slowly start to rewire your brain towards the higher vibrational emotions. Those

emotions of courage, responsibility, commitment, determination, accomplishment, because you are intentionally thinking and feeling those things every day. And when you do that, what happens is when the negative stuff comes up for you, because again, it's going to come up no matter what the negative stuff will come up with. As long as we're in a human body, we're going to have a human brain. And part of the human brain is to have negative thoughts and negative feelings. Some of those times, even some of my teachers that have been in this work for years and years and years that have lived in, you know, grew up as monks in monasteries that have been teaching stuff forever. All of them still have negative emotions that cannot make those go away. And once you create peace with that, and know that there's no such thing as perfect, you're never going to reach a place where all of a sudden you feel like this Zen all of the time. Because it's not about perfection.

It's not about feeling it all the time. It's about catching yourself when you're in those lower vibrational states, and supporting yourself to switch into the higher vibrational states. And when you practice this stuff regularly, what you do is you train your brain to be able to think and feel those things quicker, faster, that those are the things that you're going to think on purpose. So when the negative stuff comes up, for example, for me, when self doubt comes up, I feel the self doubt in my body, I know what it feels like. But I can immediately catch it and say, Okay, I know that this is self doubt, I know that I'm really scared, I know that I'm insecure. But I also know that I can practice courage right now, I can lean into courage, and then I'm able to take that aligned action.

So I want to offer all that up to you. And remind you that when you practice this, what I call mind yoga, what you do is you end up with the ability to stretch your brain to make your brain more resilient, to have your brain tilted towards emotions that are going to propel you forward that are going to keep you moving forward when things get really hard. And things get really complicated to make sure that you don't start to quit slowly and quietly on the things that you really desire that matter to you on your goals. And this, my friends, is how we create lives for us that we're proud of, and how we can look back and say I am so proud of myself for taking those actions. And I hope all of you zoom in to what it is that you desire that you have the courage to set those beautiful goals. And then you take the actions to go after them. Because the world is a better place when you are living your best self when you are living a life of purpose. All right, sweet friends, I love you all so much. And I will see you next week, Adios!

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Hey, sweet friends, if you love what you're learning, then you've got to join us in the journey. It's my all inclusive program and the best community out there giving you the education you never knew you needed to help you create a life you love. Join us at [Vanessa Calderon md.com](http://VanessaCalderon.md.com) forward slash join. I'll see you there.