

The Most Dangerous Disease

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It is a horrible, dangerous and debilitating disease. It slowly creeps in and robs people of their ability to live a happy and productive life. It is one of the most destructive forces you will find on the entire planet, and the worst part is, the cure for the disease is only found within the infected. Ok, so maybe I used a little drama to lure you in, but what I am referring to as a disease does exactly as I described. I have read several studies lately that prove what I have claimed for so long. Negativity is a highly infectious disease that leaves the host, and all those who become infected, debilitated and destroyed.

The synapses within the brain are gaps between nerves, which electrical impulses must jump across when you are thinking. Research has indicated that when you think the same thought repeatedly, the gaps between those nerves narrow, thereby allowing the electrical impulses to travel faster and easier. In essence, the more you think a certain way, the easier it is to think that way, much like an athlete trains their muscles to respond faster and to be stronger when they make certain motions.

The implications of this are far reaching and have profound implications for teaching, not the least of which is that repetition in education turns out to be just as valuable as discovery. It also explains a lot about the importance of attitude in our daily lives. The research indicates, simply put, that we reap the thoughts we sow. The more we think a certain way, the more likely we are to think that way in the future. In essence, it appears our attitude towards events that happen in our lives, prepares our attitude for what will happen next in our lives.

I have worked tirelessly for many years-as an MLA charged with the responsibility to create a provincial rural development strategy, through the writing of my book *13 Ways To Kill Your Community*, and now through my firm 13 Ways, Inc.-to help people and communities realize just how critical their attitude is to their own success. Thinking negative thoughts creates pathways in the brain that support continued negative thinking, even in positive situations. In fact, well developed pathways in the brain are the pathways that generate random thoughts even when we are not deliberately thinking.

If you are regularly thinking negative thoughts about everything because you have a negative attitude, those pathways become the paths of least resistance. That also means when you aren't thinking, those pathways of least resistance generate random thoughts that will also be negative. Negative thinking breeds more negative thinking. Fear breeds fear. Hate breeds hate. Anger breeds more anger. And in group settings, surrounded by negative people, a person can fall prey to the general attitude after relentlessly hearing negativity-or fear, or hate, or anger. In effect, negativity is contagious.

We become what we think, and our communities become what we think. Through the research I have done, it becomes clear the attitudes of the community reflect the attitudes of the individuals that make up the community. It is also why I believe that really helping a community succeed means changing its attitude, just like helping a person requires them to change their attitude. If a person isn't willing to change their attitude, they aren't really interested in changing their fate. The same applies to communities.

Be careful of your thoughts, because ultimately they become who you are.

This syndicated content is provided by Doug Griffiths, best-selling author and chief community builder at 13 Ways, a company with a mission to push communities to face their challenges to find their unique path to success. For more information visit www.13ways.ca, or we can start the conversation at info@13ways.ca.