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## THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

### ARE They One and the Same?

How is it that we have arrived in this *dark* situation?

**Thoughts are Like wearing a Pair of Sunglasses you forgot you had on**

Crystal Anzalone MS, LMHP, LPC, NCC

Imagine that thoughts are like a pair of sunglasses you forgot you were wearing.

The polarized green lens skews the tonality of your view of the

world; all the while you are unaware of its lack of Technicolor.

As a person becomes tightly imprisoned in the realm where feelings are facts to be acted upon and not emotional responses to be understood, the person's emotionally colored representation skews life.

The interpretation of an event and the actual event are treated as one and the same and yet they are not one and the same (Hayes, 2005).

"How do I apply that bit of information to my everyday life?" A practical example, "I am feeling really angry right now and I cannot seem to shake it." If you ask yourself what you have been dwelling on all morning, you might notice that you have been ruminating over how you were dismissed in the

conversation you had with your spouse last evening. Perhaps, you are feeling hopeless about ever getting a promotion, convinced that you *always* get overlooked. Again, notice what thoughts are rolling over and over in your head. The things that we tell ourselves have tremendous impact upon how we feel about ourselves, how we feel about others and how we feel about circumstances. It is important to make a clear distinction between the two. The first reaction you might have is, "Well that *is* what I experience so how can I feel any differently?"

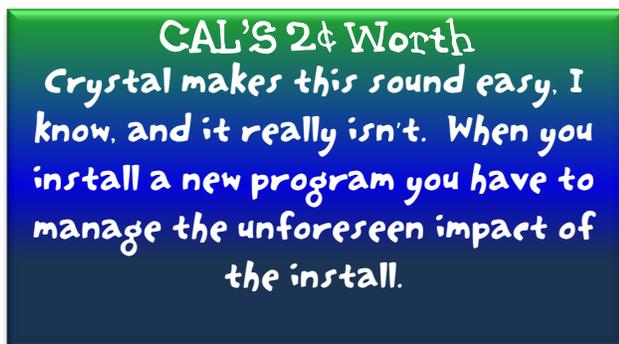
As you realize how thoughts and feelings become fused you begin the first step in making an internal shift. Thoughts and feelings run parallel so much that

### CAL'S 2¢ Worth

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it can be likened to two tree branches intertwined for a period of time becoming grafted or fused together. However, they are individual branches. The fusing of the branches almost makes it indistinguishable where one branch starts and the other branch ends. Grafting or fusing might work fine for trees; however, it does not work well for the human psyche. This is where we need to learn how to defuse thoughts from feelings since one impacts the other so tremendously. Defusion simply means separating or distancing your thoughts instead of being overtaken by them. Thoughts are nothing more than words or images in your mind. This is where metacognition becomes useful. Metacognition is simply asking yourself, "What is my mind thinking about right now?" This allows you to separate yourself from being in the thought, to placing the thought outside of yourself by asking that simple question. "What is my mind thinking of right now that is causing me to feel the way I am feeling?"

Remember, thoughts are not the feeling. Notice what you are thinking, but do not get entangled in the thought. Ask yourself, "What would happen if I did not get caught up in this particular thought that I am having right now." Then allow yourself to answer that thought in your mind.



Defusing is not a quick fix method for "feeling better" yet, if you can begin to notice that thoughts and feelings are not "one and the same," this mere observation is the beginning place to defusing your feelings from your thoughts.

For more information on

Defusing Your Thoughts  
Please contact Crystal Anzalone  
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Hayes, S. C. (2005). *Get out of your mind and into your life*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.

## CAL'S CRYPTIC KEYS 2¢ Worth Regarding Thoughts and Feelings

Couples, Computers, and Communication

Cal Kripke - Contributing Editor  
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"Sorry, my computer is running slow today," comes the response out of my phone. Half hearing the reply of the customer service representative, I muse at the number of times in a week I hear that excuse. I am sure the cause is often old overloaded technology, oversubscribed databases, or too many users assigned to a system, but some of it, to be sure, is an excuse once thought to be extraordinary, now underwhelming. Is there any real distinction between a slow computer and an apathetic user? You can't tell the difference today. The two are interdependent, working as a single unit, one unable to complete their work without the other.

You can learn a lot about human nature by working with a computer. If we understand the definition of insanity to be the act of repeating an action over and over again expecting a different result, then we must acknowledge that computers spawn insanity. Some of us remember the old DOS prompt "Abort, Retry, Fail?" with the default action being "Retry." How many times did we hit the key to retry the failure? In later generations we saw the pop-up window, taunting us to restart the program or try again. Just like phone routing systems, computers are an arbitrary ally in our struggle for efficiency, mocking us gently with each strike of the key. They are ruthlessly consistent, sparing no thought to our emotions in the matter.

## Computers Imitating Life

My wife is a living, breathing computer. She is efficient, organized, and thorough. She represents what we expect in a computer. I, on the other hand, represent what we get in a computer, lost bits of memory, failures, lockups, freezes, and error messages that provoke and dare you to "Retry," an irresistible proposition.

My wife processes her feelings and thoughts externally. If she were a computer her screen would be scrolling data, her printer would be streaming 30 double-sided pages per minute. If I were a computer, I would be the rotating hour glass on your screen because I process internally. I provide output when I'm done processing, but that means little to the class of user who needs feedback on demand. My wife is of this class. Watching the spinning hour glass she rapidly strikes the return key or clicks the mouse until the I/O buffer reaches saturation. She gives voice to her frustration as she communicates through her mouse in deranged Morse code, <click>, <click>, <clickity>, <click>, "My computers not working!" <click>, <clickity>, <click>! In a similar way I unintentionally provoke my wife by providing her a "Retry" key and she strikes that key instinctively, without respite. The very definition of insanity for sure, but with enough persistence, she truly does get a different result. Let me provide a real example for you.

### The Retry Key and the Abort Key

On any given summer day as my wife and I stroll to our parked car, I have ample time to unlock the doors with my remote before entry is required. It is a simple task that requires no real thinking; a habitual motion. Yet as we move away from the summer solstice into the hiemal seasons I find myself racing for my remote at the sound of hastened footsteps as my wife breaks pace for the car door. While I press relentlessly and ineffectively at the remote, fighting the density of my padded glove against the smurf-sized buttons, I hear the universal sound for "open the door!" -- The rapidly repeating thud of the door

handle being charged like a dry water pump in the hands of a dehydrated camel jockey. As I bite into the fingertips of my glove to wrench it from my hand, I know it is already too late to circumvent the chain of events that are unfolding. My wife, no longer consciously aware that she is pumping the door handle, as it has become rhythmic to the melody playing out in her mind, goes verbal. "Open the door! Open the door! Open the door!" Her words raising an octave with each repetition and synchronizing with the charging of the door handle. I speak the words with her in unison in my mind, though much softer, "Open the door! Open the door! Open the door!" Under pressure and straining to see the remote through misty breath, I strike the lock button twice initiating the horn, which alerts a different sense that my finger is not on the correct button. Not surprisingly, this escalates the synchronized rhythm with emphasis and disbelief. My mind engages, my cold bare finger receives the tactile signal, and I press the lock release for the door. It should be over, but I still hear the strain of the door handle! Alas, I have only unlocked the driver door and guess who is still singing the song of suffrage? The car is rocking, bystanders are watching, and with adrenaline pumping, I focus my "fight or flight" response to zero in on the double-strike releasing the car locks. Like the wind, my wife is vapor, seemingly reappearing in the passenger seat of the car. I never saw the door open.

Most of us remember as kids having a toy that winds up and once wound, deploys in a furious fashion as it releases energy. Such is the case here. While my wife was outside the car, she was building energy. With each charge of the door handle, her meter was throttling kilohertz. The release of that energy doesn't take place until she is inside the car and out of the direct cold. If I took inventory of my senses, I would pause before entering the vehicle, but I haven't a single clandestine distraction to provide me cover for such hesitation. My mind is moving too fast, still clenching the fingertips of my glove between my teeth and smothering the remote in the palm of

my hand, I enter the vehicle. Before I can close the door, my wife goes kinetic in verbal melee. To the uninformed bystander it may seem my wife has Tourette Syndrome, but there is nothing random in her voice. With clarity, force, and barring hesitation, she delivers a masterful verbal volley. Every statement is a question and every question expects an answer, but not until the volley is complete. I have no recourse, being guilty as charged, and can only utter a lopsided rejoinder. I know better than to answer the stream of rhetorical questions, I have but one abort clause, "I'm sorry baby."

I never have to engage the "Retry" key with my wife. She is always operating at the highest level, equipped with self-tuning algorithms. I have to engage the "Abort" key with my wife. With her screen scrolling data and her printer spitting pages I try the "escape" key, the "control" key followed by the "c" or "x" key, or the mother of all abort sequences, "control-alt-delete." In time the screen buffer overflows and the printer runs out of paper, and I begin sorting the data. My wife is a multi-threaded person. Running thoughts in tandem and connecting data to create the bigger picture. I am single-threaded, like the "alt-tab" key combination on your computer, attempting to connect the dots by halting one application and starting another. In this way, she is superior to me.

## Message Acknowledgement

We often find ourselves pushing each other's buttons. She is striking the "Retry" key, "Cal, did you hear me?" and I am pushing the "Abort" key, "Yeah, okay honey, Got it." It is a circuitous exercise that takes on a life of its own. Our communication mirrors networking protocols. In the computer world, TCP (Transfer Control Protocol) and UDP (User Datagram Protocol) are two common protocols used to send data over a network. It isn't important that you understand the protocols, you only need to know that TCP requires an acknowledgement to every message sent over a network, UDP does not, it just assumes the message was received. My wife communicates via TCP and I via UDP.

For every question she asks and every piece of information she provides someone must reciprocate. How this "Transfer of Control" makes her an effective communicator is axiomatic. There are two delivery methods she employs. The first is something I classify as "Message Recall" and it goes something like this, "Cal, I need you to pick up milk at the store." After a pause, "Cal, did you hear me? I need you to pick up milk at the store." Knowing she will persist, I send back a faulty acknowledgement, "Uh, yeah honey, I will run by the store." her reply is quick and stern, "I need you to get milk at the store!" finally, a valid acknowledgement, "Okay, I will pick up milk for you." -- Transmission Complete. I classify her second method as "Message Barrage." It is generally a combination of sticky notes, text messages, voice messages, and verbal couriers. I get a voice mail telling me to get milk at the store; I get a text message to confirm that I got the voicemail message. I find sticky notes attached to my wallet, computer screen, phone, or notebook. My youngest son relays a message from his mom to remind me to get milk. When I do speak to my wife, what do you think is among the first things she asks me? "Did you get milk?" She is not particularly interested in the method in which I acknowledge the request, she only requires the acknowledgement.

Surprisingly, my "UDP" approach doesn't handicap me in spite of its shortcomings because my wife misses very little. It is a benefit of her sagacious mind that I can use a "lazy" protocol and still be in business. Beyond my wife and her skills though, my "Datagrams" don't always reach other targets.

My wife works smarter, not harder... I, on the other hand, just work harder. I admire my wife and learn from her. I'm awed at her gifts, how she organizes her thoughts, juggles a schedule in her mind, and pulls information out of the air. She supersedes me in marvelous ways. I am inspired to overcome my hourglass spinning, broadcast scattering, male-oriented machinations.

## Programming Your Computer

So how do we deal with inert computers, error messages, lost datagrams, and information overload? We have to build a program to manage our environment. Programs can be poorly constructed or richly designed. In practice, a well-developed program builds off of the strongest resources. In this example, my wife represents the majority of our finest components. Our program involves adding acknowledgement messages to accompany the spinning hour glass, flow control to manage screen output and print jobs, and a transfer of all message packets to a TCP network protocol requiring acknowledgement. We both have to change our algorithms, but I have the greater burden to reflect improved performance. No more lazy communication, no more internal processing without progress updates, and no more frosty delays unlocking the car door!

*I make this sound easy, I know, and it really isn't. When you install a new program you have to manage the unforeseen impact of the install.*

By fixing one thing you might break another. You might find it doesn't perform as expected and you need to update or patch it (Will verbose progress updates slow my spinning hourglass?) You might even get a virus that destroys the integrity of your programming, crashing your computer and causing severe damage.

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With effort and humility, we can clean up our configuration and build new programs to replace the old programs. A virus though, comes from outside the computer. It is beyond our power to "program" and it must be avoided. A virus infiltrates through temptation or neglect, like an email from Indonesia

promising an unexpected inheritance of £500,000 (Pounds British Sterling) along with your cooperation, or perhaps that animated advertisement promising you an iPad if you can hit the target with your mouse. It presents itself as a harmless email, website, or program, and is usually suspicious only to the rational mind. My wife and I can reprogram, repurpose, and reallocate resources on-demand, but we can do little about the damage of a virus until after it is finished, leaving diligence as the finest impediment to a virus. I am speaking now in terms of 'Life Imitating Computers.' Just as a virus often enters a computer through network data packets, viruses often originate in our thoughts and communication. That's where we deny them access. We are not unlike our creation, the computer. We are vulnerable in many of the same ways.

So now, to my wife's delight, I process out loud when I am wrestling with an abstruse dilemma or defining an unknown quantity. I am evolving in my communication both in my acknowledgements and my messaging. My wife is truncating data and throttling down her message streams for my alt-tab processing, helping me sort the data in transit. Daily we write and update our program. We fill our data queues, remain vigilant against viruses, and continue to strike the "Retry" and "Abort" key, knowing that with the loopholes in our programming, it isn't always a sign of insanity. Oh, there are deeper truths to be sure, but I have to stop here... my computer is really running slow today.

IF YOU OR YOUR SPOUSE WOULD LIKE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE SERVICES WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO CALL CRYSTAL AT 402.598.8511.

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