

Mind Shifting to Boost Your Mind

Dawn Brown

Life is a paradox. For every true statement we can find supporting evidence for its opposite. Life's many 'right answers' seem to contradict each other. There is a gift in all this confusion: What seems like the right answer for you may not be the right answer for me. What may feel right for me to do in one situation may be the opposite of what I need do in the next situation. Welcome to life as we know it! There are no certainties and guarantees.

I can understand why we may feel eager to 'do something' when life feels painful. There have been times when I've wished for a magic pill I could take that would make my problems disappear. It doesn't exist! And focusing on "how to" can cause us to skip the essential emotional work we need to do to heal. It can cause us to think that if we do this and that, if we take action, we'll be fine.

Consider this: *changing behavior won't work unless you change your mind*. Have you ever been around people who have been trained to smile and say, "Have a nice day and visit us again" when it is clear they wish you were in another country? And have you ever been around those who genuinely like what they're doing and mean those words? We can do all the steps, we can train for change in behaviour but if our minds don't change we haven't really changed.

And while it may seem like a contradiction, I've encouraged others and myself to 'fake it till you make it'. There have been times when I've not felt like smiling but I've done so and something happens... I find I'm smiling on the inside! So if we are willing to grow, if we have the desire to do so, then trying on new behaviour can be just the encouragement we need to internalize the new behaviour. I don't mean just going through the motions. That happens when we're stuck at faking it and never really get to the 'making it' part. I mean going through the process where we realize that strengthening our new behaviour is impossible without shifts taking place in our minds.

Life's unpredictable nature is an invitation for us to keep growing. We'll never have all the answers and life's journey isn't about finding the right answers; it's about enjoying the search for what feels right. That search takes place within each of us. Often we think the key is to try and change situations or get others to change. That thinking keeps us stuck in struggling to do the impossible. And that is painful. My favourite question to get me moving is "What am I learning from this?" This question is a boost for your mind because it shifts the control of your happiness from the external – the hands of others, to the internal – your own mind.

Dawn Brown is a psychotherapist, international speaker, and author (*That Perception Thing!* and *Expert Women Who Speak...Speak Out!*). Her new book: ***Been There, Done That... Now What?*** is available in bookstores and at www.perceptionshift.com.