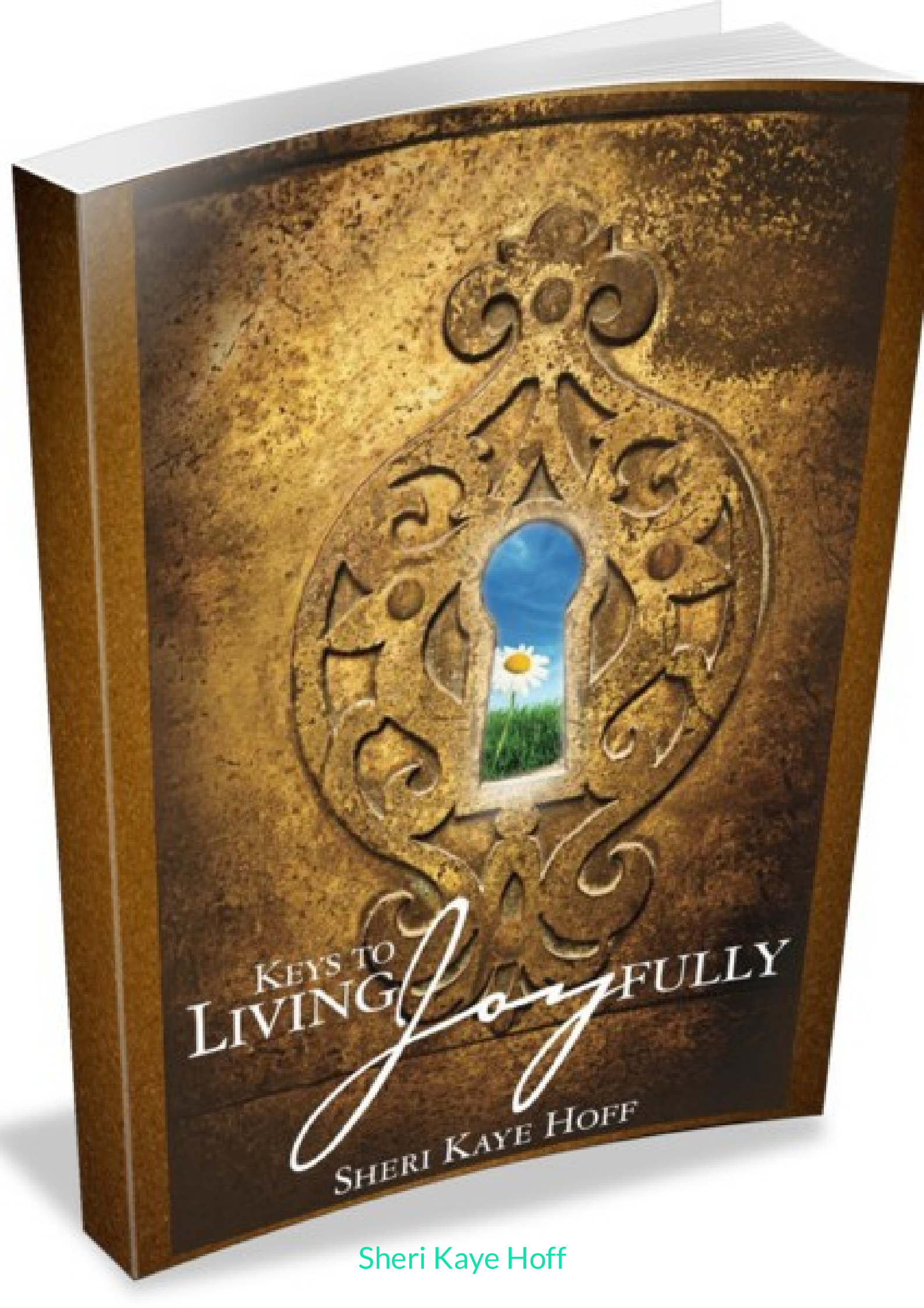




KEYS TO
LIVING

Joy FULLY

SHERI KAYE HOFF

Sheri Kaye Hoff

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right?

Chapter 2: Is Your Heart Thinking Right? Excerpted from [Keys to Living Joyfully](#)

As a man thinks in his heart so is he. Proverbs 23:7

These are such simple words, yet the meaning is profound.

Whatever you think about and internalize in your heart, is what you become. Whatever you believe in your core or spirit is what you become. So if you believe that you are incapable of joy and happiness, this belief will manifest in your life. If you are worried about your weight, your bills, never having enough money, being sick, losing your job and the list could go on and on, this is what you have created in your life.

As humans, we may think we have little control over many or even most things in the world around us, but we do have the ability to control our thoughts. Reality is created for you in your thoughts. There have been many times when the disaster you created in [your mind](#) was far worse than the actual circumstances, yet you experienced the horror of your thoughts. Think of it this way:

You sense that something is wrong at work and you start to worry, people at work start acting differently towards you because you have changed. This difference then heightens your sense of insecurity, which further alters your thoughts and your actions. Ultimately, work becomes a miserable place, which you have brought on YOURSELF.

If you truly wrap your arms around this idea of how we shape our lives based on our thoughts, you hold the key to unlocking amazing transformative power in your life.

If you are actively engaging in this type of self-sabotage, forgive yourself and then act on your new sense of the importance of thoughts. No good will come out of berating yourself for past actions. Now that you know that your thoughts create reality, you can act to correct negative patterns.

You may be saying to yourself that you cannot control your thoughts. You may even be saying that thoughts just happen. You can change your thoughts. Knowing this gives you deep power. What are you thinking about you right now? Are you thinking about all of the things you should be doing? Are you worrying about today? Or tomorrow? Are you angry with people who have hurt you? You can be free from all of these thoughts and it is a conscious choice of freedom.

When my oldest daughter was in 7th grade, she became chronically ill and missed 25 days of school. She had lived most of her school years as a successful “A” and “B” student. Suddenly, she was earning “C”s and even an occasional “D”. She started to buy in to the “fact” that she was not a good scholar or student. She started to believe that she was not smart. She thought these things instead of seeing the reality that missing school impacts learning and grades. She had surgery at the end of 7th grade and became much healthier. However, her grades were still suffering at the beginning of 8th grade because she no longer believed that she was a good student.

Her turning point came when I realized all of the negative thoughts that she was spinning in her head.

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right

We talked about this and created some affirmations like:

"I am so thankful that I remember everything I study"

"I am so thankful that I am great at taking tests"

"I am so thankful that I remember to bring all of my assignments to school and turn them in on time".

Gradually, she internalized a new view of herself as a smart, capable student, and her grades started coming back up again.

Think about this situation and apply it to your own life. Where are you struggling? Are you struggling financially? Is it hard to maintain a healthy weight? Are you unhappy and depressed? Is it a chore for you to wake up and begin each day? Are your interpersonal relationships difficult? Think about how you think about these things. This is a gift we have as human beings—the fact that we can think about our thinking.

If you truly wrap your arms around this idea of how we shape our lives based on our thoughts, you hold the key to unlocking amazing transformative power in your life.

In my own life, I experienced the tragic suicide death of my younger brother when I was 17 years old and he was 15 years old. Of course, this altered my life forever. One of the most harmful long-term effects on my life was how I viewed my ability to experience happiness. This loss in my life is what eventually inspired my quest of determining how a person could live a joyful life.

Since I experienced such extreme grief and shock, I was naturally depressed and in therapy for a few years after the death of my brother. Even after I finished therapy, my outlook on my life seemed permanently altered. I believed that true happiness did not exist for me. I began a cycle of on and off depression that influenced my life for the next twenty years. As I entered my late thirties, I thought of myself as a depressed person and even tried to reach acceptance of this in my life. Then, I realized that I could not, would not accept that happiness would be forever elusive to me.

I have always believed intellectually in positive thinking. I viewed it as something that I needed to “psych myself up to do” and I did not have the energy to do it. I also most often acted positively and came across to others as an enthusiastic outgoing person even though I felt miserable on the inside. I craved being able to feel peaceful and content. In my heart, I doubted whether positive thinking could permanently alter habits of thoughts that existed for years.

One day the light bulb went on for me. I came to view that thinking could be disciplined just like actions. I learned that I could methodically reprogram my thinking and live the life that I always dreamed of living—a life of joy, peace, passion, and energy every moment of the day.

This is how I reprogrammed my mind. Every time I caught myself dwelling on the negative. I would declare aloud:

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right

"I am so thankful that I am so happy".

At first, I felt silly, but I refused to allow negative thoughts to simmer. I took responsibility for my thoughts. Any time I found myself getting sucked into despair and worry, I reminded myself that this was a choice I was making and I wanted to choose good for my life.

A simple example of this is when I was stuck in rush-hour traffic and felt the anxiety rising in my mind. Instead of letting this stress and anxiety take over, I would calmly say,

"Thank you that I have all of the time I need to arrive at my destination".

I felt immediate calm and it seemed that almost every time, a way out or forward would open for me.

Rush-hour traffic is a small example and may not seem significant to you, but what it did for me is prove that the technique works. When I realized that this was working on a small level in my life, the possibility opened for me that this simple process could profoundly change my whole life in a huge way.

When I knew that I would have to handle a difficult situation at work, I would say:

"Thank you for my perfectly smooth meeting and positive results."

If I felt upset with my husband or children, instead of letting those feelings fester and grow, I would say:

"Thank you for my great relationships with my family."

I truly stopped being irritated by small things and most big things. I began to feel a sense of calm and peace. Joy began seeping into my life as I made some room to experience it.

I began to keep a daily journal of my affirmations. Now, I have the ability to go through past journals and see how my life has changed.

Do you struggle with your finances? For much of my adult life, I have been plagued with money worries and concerns. For my entire married life, my husband has been self-employed. For those of you who are small business owners, you know that cash flow can be unpredictable. Even when things were fine, I had this fear that there was never going to be enough money to pay the bills or get ahead financially. I worked full time, as well.

Our lives together were completely immersed in my husband working long hours at his business, I worked full time, and we were raising our three children. Life was a constant scheduling challenge and the area that suffered for me was my health (lack of sleep and lack of exercise).

Focusing on fear and worry was a waste of my time and a complete drain on my spirit.

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right

Looking back, most of my fears were unrealized. Yes, there were times that bills were paid a little late, but we made it. Focusing on fear and worry was a waste of my time and a complete drain on my spirit. I started to apply my thought reprogramming process to our financial lives.

I am a very spiritual person and a Christian. My faith is vital to my life and is probably the only thing that truly made me survive the crushing experience of losing my brother. In my darkest times when I was angry with God, sometimes I could only utter the words:

"Please, God, Please, God".

My affirmations, prayers, and meditations are based on my faith and belief in God. However, affirmations still work even if you are not sure what role religion and God play in your life. Below is the plan that I created to keep my thoughts heading in the right direction. Please feel free to adapt the method to what works for you.

I thanked God every day for financial abundance, and I praised and blessed everything in my life. As soon as I began to think about worrying about a bill, I thanked God for the company where we owed money, and I praised and blessed that company. I praised and blessed my husband's business and his customers.

Within three months of doing this, my husband's business was taking in new clients. He experienced unusual growth. I was able to leave my job and take a job teaching at a college where I worked from home when I was not physically in class teaching. I also taught some of my classes online. This freed me to pursue my doctoral studies and to pursue my passion for writing.

My life started to turn into my dream life. The life-changing piece of this is that if I had my previous attitude, I might not have recognized that I was truly beginning to live my dream life. I would have been stuck in my previous worry pattern of fearing the worst.

I know it sounds unbelievable, but controlling your thoughts completely alters the fabric and substance of your life.

Man, alone, has the power to transform his thoughts into physical reality; man, alone, can dream and make his dreams come true. ~ Napoleon Hill

My daily focus on thinking right starts like this:

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right

- Immediately upon getting up in the morning, I say the “Lord’s Prayer” slowly
- I have a vitamin drink and anoint myself with Jerusalem oil.
- I play soothing music.
- I write in a beautiful journal.
- I write a thank you to God for his answers to prayer,
- I write praises and blessings for everything in my life.
- I write affirmations for things that are not yet in my life, but I write in the present like they already exist.
- I write a prayer to the Lord. In this prayer, I pray for others for healing, I pray for family. I pray for a peaceful heart and for God to guide me and for awareness of my thoughts throughout the day.
- I meditate by slowly breathing in and out and clearing my mind to listen for answers.
- Sometimes, I receive answers and guidance from God and I write these thoughts down in my journal.
- I end by reading over the writing for the morning.

Let's look at each element of my ritual.

Immediately upon waking, I say the “Lord’s Prayer”.

The Lord’s Prayer is important to me because I feel connected to ancient Christians. This prayer has been recited for about 2,000 years. It reminds me that we are all one.

The Lord’s Prayer

Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and glory, forever and ever. Amen

Other inspirational words you may want to use include Psalms 23, the Footprints poem, Psalms 27:1, Numbers 6: 24-26. Or you may have your own that you like.

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.” Numbers 6: 24-26 NIV

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right

I have a vitamin drink and anoint myself with Jerusalem oil.

My vitamin drink and Jerusalem oil are tangible things that connect my senses to my prayers. I feel like I am doing something good for the inside of my body and the outside of my body. I feel prepared.

I also anoint my children with Jerusalem oil every day. I say:

"God loves you, and I love you, too." As I make the sign of the cross on their foreheads.

In our family, we also anoint injuries. My younger daughter, Sonja, was a Pointe ballerina and suffers from Achilles Tendonitis. We anointed her ankles and blessed them. Of course, we ice it, too.

I play soothing music.

Soothing music creates a peaceful mood. I like a soundscape type of music with no lyrics. I use the same type of music that massage therapists use.

Experiment until you find something that is soothing to you. The idea is that the music is the background. You should not be thinking about the music.

I write in a beautiful journal.

My journal is beautiful so I feel like I am writing a great treasure. I once thought I would just write in a notebook and then I felt strangely sad about it. For me, it is important that my journal is beautiful. This may not be important to you.

You can purchase nice journals at any bookstore and most discount stores, as well. Once a journal is filled with my thoughts, I put it in my filing cabinet for later reference. I have the start date and the end date on the inside cover of each journal.

I write a thank you to God for his answers to prayer.

I think about how God has answered my prayers and thank him. It is important for me to begin by being thankful. Sometimes during this time, I am awed and surprised as I reflect and see answers to prayers.

Once I was praying for a successful class that I was going to teach. I forgot that I asked for this in my prayers. I looked back through my journal and saw this prayer. Then, I realized that my student roster was at the class size maximum level. I made sure to thank God for answering my prayer this way.

I write praises and blessings for everything in my life.

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right

Writing praises and blessing for everything in my life reminds me of all I have. I take care to praise and bless things that are unpleasant as well. Once I was having a problem with my cell phone provider and I wrote in my journal about it. I praised and blessed the company. Later that day, when I was talking to a customer service rep, she realized that they had made a \$1200 mistake and corrected everything. I did not get angry about it. I was just thankful for resolution.

I write affirmations for things that are not yet in my life, but I write in the present as if they already exist.

My affirmations that I write regarding my goals are the key to my motivation throughout the day. I write in present tense as if they are already in my life. I focus on my vision for my life. My top affirmations are:

"I am so grateful now that I inspire people daily to live their visions."

"I am so grateful now that I have financial abundance, abundant health, and great relationships"

"I am so grateful now that right people are coming into my life at the right time".

I write a prayer to the Lord. In this prayer, I pray for others for healing. I pray for family, I pray for a peaceful heart and for God to guide me. I pray for awareness of my thoughts throughout the day.

My written prayers to the Lord vary, but often consist of petitions for healing, guidance, prayer for family members, and prayers for strength.

Here is an example of one of my written prayers from my journal:

"Dear Lord, I give my heart and trust to you though I often try to take it back. Forgive my human failings. Let your light shine on me, as I keep my heart and mind focused on you. Renew me daily. Breathe your encouragement into my soul, right at the moment when I desperately need you, but may not see it. I thank you and praise you for being all, and for meeting my every need. Amen"

I meditate by slowly breathing in and out and clearing my mind to listen for answers.

Once I pray, I quietly meditate and listen. When I first started this morning ritual, I did not even think about the listening part. I realized I was so busy asking for what I needed or others needed that I forgot about listening. It is very important to allow stillness and quiet your heart.

I am still and quiet during listening. Sometimes, I do not discern any answers or guidance. Other times, I am honored and blessed by knowing deep in my soul, exactly what God wants me to do next.

Sometimes, I receive answers and guidance from God and I write these thoughts down in my journal.

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right

Sometimes I feel an immediate response. I pick up my pen and write down the inspirations from the Lord. When I prayed the above prayer, this was the response that I felt and wrote down:

"Do not fear. Trust me. Let me lead and guide you. I love you. I know you.

Quiet your spirit to hear me.

Love me. Live. Feel my joy fill your heart.

Yearn for me. Wait on me.

I have a path. I have the timeline.

All is good."

Read the above words slowly and reflect on them. Imagine the Lord whispering them in your ear. Live in the moment, trusting that your needs will be met and spend time listening for guidance. Take time to see God's direction in your life.

Rest assured that you are deeply loved. These thoughts create joy and peace in your life.

These words are deeply meaningful to me. I put them on the wall so I can see them daily. If I do not take the time to listen, I could miss amazing, uplifting words like this.

Think about how you demonstrate love and spirituality in your life and write down a sentence or two.

Think about your prayer requests, write them down, and then consider whether you have given God your complete trust.

Write down answered prayers and contemplate how God chose to answer your prayers. Remind yourself frequently throughout the week, "all is good".

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right

I end by reading over the writing for the morning aloud a couple of times.

My final step of reflecting and reading the journal entry of the day helps me internalize my thoughts and affirms my intention to create good thoughts throughout the day.

This entire morning ritual process takes about an hour—sometimes only fifteen minutes, sometimes up to two hours. The point is that I rarely skip or miss my morning ritual.

My journal travels with me on trips and vacations. I read older entries every once in awhile for perspective and to see the ongoing miracle of life and God's will and plan in my life. Your own process may be slightly different, but I recommend that you put something in place that you do every morning to start your day out thinking right. This process feeds my spirit and nourishes me.

If someone told me five or ten years ago that I would spend an hour or two praying, writing, and meditating every morning, I would have thought they were crazy. There was no way that I had that kind of time. After all, I was a busy working mom.

However, I discovered that this morning ritual was more important to me than brushing my teeth. I look forward to waking up each day and having this peaceful time. I do not time this process. I use the time that it takes to get into a peaceful and graceful state of mind.

Do not worry about spending an hour or two. If you can carve out fifteen minutes, that is okay, too. The important part is to do this every day.

Design your own daily ritual here:

Thinking right is also a cornerstone of the concept of the Law of Attraction, which has been the subject of many books and ideas regarding successful thinking.

Nurture your mind with great thoughts, for you will never go any higher than you think. ~ Benjamin Disraeli

I encourage you to seriously examine your thoughts and make a commitment to change any that are disrupting your life and creating misery or hardship.

One of the most difficult areas to address in our lives may be anger thoughts. I have made it a goal to harbor no anger. Anger is ultimately destructive to me. When I am angry, I lose sleep and the ability to focus and concentrate. Anger does not truly hurt the offending person; however, it destroys the angry person. Anger uses up my time, energy, and health. I try praising and blessing the person. I pray about it. Then I refocus my thoughts to an area where I feel passion or an area where I can do something.

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right

Anger sometimes happens in the workplace where team members may let you down, an employee may miss a deadline, or maybe someone comes down hard on you unfairly. I refocus any angry thoughts toward positive actions that I can take to diffuse the situation or make the overall situation better. I can honestly say that there has never been one time where I reacted with anger and later thought that I acted correctly in the situation. This thought helps me to remain calm in most instances.

Family members also often spark anger in people. Somehow, our family members know exactly what buttons to push. I encourage you to be mindful of anger festering between you and family members. I say a prayer daily that the right words come out of my mouth at the right times. Sometimes I have caught myself just as I am getting angry with my children. I have actually said aloud, "I need to stop talking now." and then shut my mouth. Children remember words and harsh words are damaging. I am sure that you can remember a few from your childhood.

Proverbs 21:23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity. (NIV)

Guard your thoughts towards your family members and do not let anger become a barrier. This may be an area in your life where you may consider prayer, and daily praise and bless certain family members until you feel no anger.

Repetitive bad habits may also be an area in your life where you find it difficult to change your thoughts. This requires effort and concentration on your part.

One of my repetitive bad habits is comfort eating when I experience stress. Reducing overall stress has helped me with this, but I still have to use some affirmations to get through difficult stretches with this. My affirmations that I say are:

"I am so thankful that I only eat when I am hungry" or "I am so thankful that I eat delicious and nutritious food at the right time and the right quantities".

Prior to my efforts in thinking better, I would let a bad eating day affect my self-esteem for weeks. I also had a poor and inaccurate image of my body. I felt grossly overweight whether I was a size six or a size 16.

I began praising and blessing my body as my body temple. I began seeing my body as my vehicle for energy and stamina, not something that looked good or looked bad. I started thanking God for creating me.

For you created me in most being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made: your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalms 139:13, 14 (NIV).

Gradually, my thoughts began changing and my attitude regarding food started aligning with the ideas of goodness and health. This truly is a miracle for me since I disliked my body from the time I was twelve years old and went through puberty.

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right

I yo-yo dieted for twenty-five years. Every social occasion was affected by whether or not I felt thin or fat. I felt like I had a monkey on my back at all times. The release from these terrible thoughts brings tears to my eyes as I think about it. My eating habits are not perfect, but my attitude is different. I am much more forgiving and gentle with myself. I have found that gentleness provides a quicker return to better eating habits after a meal or two of over indulgence.

Think left and think right and think low and think high. Oh, the thinks you can think up if only you try! Dr. Seuss

You are wonderfully made. Everything about you is miraculous. Toss aside those self-doubts and criticisms. Celebrate, today, the miracle of you!

Write down areas that seem to cause you troubles in your thought life.

Create positive affirmations/praises and blessings that will help you counter the feelings above. Be sure to write in the present tense.

When you are reworking your thought process and focusing on changing your thoughts, avoid saying things like:

"I always do"...or "My problem is".

Focus on the solution—the way that you want to be.

My continuous focus and diligence on thinking the right thoughts have created a truly joyful, passionate, and peaceful life on a daily basis for me. I wake up and know that my life is great each day. I was not always like this, which is why I feel so awed and inspired to share with you how my life has completely improved and I am living my dream life.

I was one who thought that my spark left when my brother died. I discovered that I do have a bright light within me and I know you do too.

[Get the Full Book Keys to Living Joyfully here](#)

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right

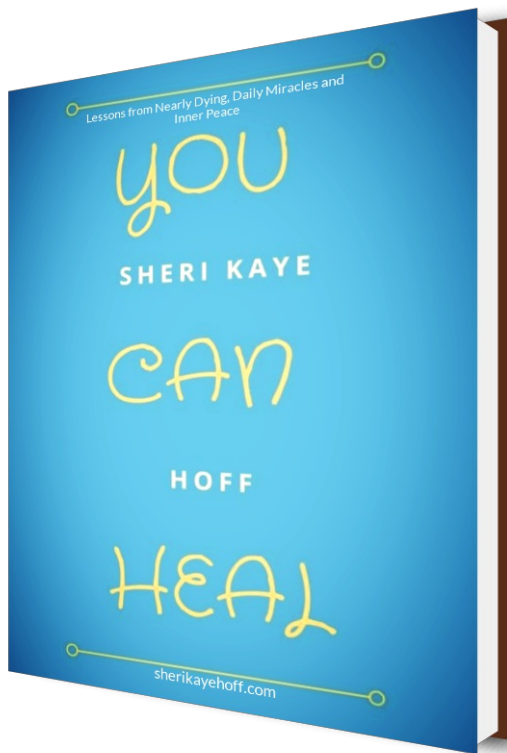


About the Author: Sheri Kaye Hoff

Coach, Trainer, and Author, Sheri Kaye Hoff, is a Business and Life Coach known for inspiring massive action and a catalyst for personal and business growth, joy, and profits in a way that is fun, relaxing, and fulfilling, Sheri inspires people to do the work they love and make more money. Sheri helps business owners and professionals to relax into success. She uses both spiritual and practical techniques to obliterate blocks and create dramatic change. She is a business, leadership, happiness, and inner game expert. She has overcome nearly dying, and the loss of her brother at an early age. She has made it her life mission to discover the keys to happiness and success and then share them with her clients and community.

[Learn more about Sheri.](#)

Chapter 2 Is Your Heart Thinking Right



More Books from Sheri

