

Thought Auditions

A Dream Author Workbook

Thought Auditions is a concept and process I created to help people manage their minds more easily and effectively.



When we first learn that everything we create in our lives comes from our thoughts, and that all thoughts are optional, we tend to get quite excited. It's thrilling to realise that we have a choice about what we want to believe and what we want to make things mean. 'There's nothing to stop me thinking that I'm going to be hugely successful, and happy, and rich,' we say to ourselves. 'If I think it, then I'll feel great, and I'll go out and create that result in my life. Yippee!'

Then we find that it's not quite so simple. There *is* something stopping us, and it's a significant something: we simply don't believe the new thought that we're trying to live

from. We don't believe we will be successful or happy or rich. What many of us actually believe is that we'll probably fail, and not get much of what we want. And then we judge ourselves for failing to 'install' our new, chosen thought successfully. And every time the old, sub-optimal thought pops up in our brain, and we find we still believe it more than we believe the new one, we feel faulty and ashamed. 'I'm still believing that terrible thought,' we berate ourselves. 'I'm literally ruining my life and future by thinking all wrong.'

I've coached more than a thousand writers in my Dream Author Coaching programme, and I cannot tell you how often I have heard my coachees (as I call them) say versions of this: 'I thought I'd learned how to manage my thoughts, and I've been feeling so much better, but the other day I found myself thinking, "What if my book never gets published?" Maybe I haven't learned anything. Now I feel awful — about my book's likely failure, and because I think I must be doing Dream Author wrong if I can't make my "bad" thoughts go away.'

Do you see what's happening here? More, and harsher, negative thoughts are flooding in, about the perceived

inability to stop believing negative thoughts. And that does a person no good at all.

(Spoiler: Thought Auditions are the solution. Read on to find out more...)



Important things to know about thoughts

- Our brains have over 70,000 thoughts a day;
- We can't prevent any thought from appearing in our brain. If it's there — if we find ourselves thinking it — then it's there. Nothing is more futile than telling ourselves we shouldn't have had that particular thought. We didn't seek it out or invite it in; it simply appeared. We could not have stopped that from happening. This is why we should never judge ourselves for having thoughts. It's what we do next that counts. By which I mean...

- We can decide what we want to do with/about a thought once we are aware that it's in our mind. This is where all our power lies.



Sometimes, we might have a negative and potentially dangerous thought that is only not dangerous because we don't believe it at all. For example, if Fred annoys me and I say angrily to my friend, 'I'm going to kill Fred one day,' Fred is not in any physical danger if I do not believe my thought. Most of the time, when people say 'I'm going to kill so-and-so,' their belief that they will actually commit a murder is at 0%. They know they will not; they were only expressing anger in a hyperbolic way.

In other situations, we have negative thoughts and find that we do believe them. Some common ones in this category are:

- 'I'm probably going to fail.'
- 'I'm not good enough.'
- 'I might as well give up now.'

- 'Huge success just isn't possible for someone like me.'

When we discover that our thoughts and beliefs create our whole lives, we are suddenly motivated to banish all negative thoughts, and there's a strong tendency to be harshly self-critical when we judge that we've failed to do this — when we notice that self-doubting thoughts creep back in quite regularly.

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Here's the thing: when we believe that some thoughts are 'bad', and that we need them to go away and never come back, we are giving all of our power away to those thoughts — the very same thoughts that we *don't* want to put in charge of our lives.

We are never going to be able to control which sentences or combinations of words and ideas pop up in our brains. And if we're terrified of 'bad guy' thoughts making an appearance, then we are being controlled by those bad guys, via our fear of them.

So now let's get acquainted with Thought Auditions.
What the **** are they?



Thought Auditions...

... is a concept that I probably wouldn't have come up with if I hadn't co-written two musicals. Both started life as school plays, and the auditions were completely open. Any pupil at

the school could come and audition, even if they couldn't sing or dance or act very well at all.

When we did the auditions for the second musical, some children who had failed to get main parts in the first one came back and auditioned again, hoping to get leading roles this time round. And some of them failed again — because they still couldn't sing or dance or act to a high enough standard. Still, they were more than welcome to come along and audition!

At these auditions, I was one of three Casting Directors. And we had all the power. Anyone was free to come along, have their turn on stage and give it their best shot, but we had the final say about whether or not they got a part.



I can't actually remember when the idea of Thought Auditions first came to me. As I said before, thoughts just appear in our brains as if from nowhere — sometimes as if by magic. I found myself thinking, 'What if each of us is the one and only casting director of our own ongoing thought show?' It wasn't long before I was saying to myself excitedly: *This is the way! This is how we choose, on*

purpose, the thoughts that we want to ‘cast’ (and by cast, I meant ‘think/believe’).



Everything you need to know about Thought Auditions

- Any thought can turn up and audition, whenever it wants to. This is what open auditions are meant to be, right? Totally available to everyone — anyone can take part. Nothing has gone wrong if someone who is completely out of tune turns up to audition for the part of Maria in *West Side Story*. It's what's meant to happen. Similarly, nothing has gone wrong if a thought you might not want to choose suddenly appears in your brain.
- You, the Casting Director, are in charge. If you think 'Ooh, this is a great thought and I definitely want to cast it in the lead role in my Thought Show, because doing so will bring huge benefits — applause, great reviews, success, happiness, and all the good things,' *then you can choose in favour of that thought*. You can make it the star of your show and give it the main part. If you don't think this

particular thought will benefit the show, *you can choose against it* and say, 'Thanks very much for coming in, Negative and Discouraging Thought, but I'm afraid you've been unsuccessful on this occasion.'

- If that plucky and determined Negative and Discouraging Thought turns up again the next day for another audition (because our thought auditions are always open), then no problem! We, as Casting Director, get to choose again. We can say the very same words to the thoughts we're choosing against, each and every time they audition: 'No, thanks! I'm afraid you didn't get a part this time either. Sorry.'

Do you see how, by using the Thought Auditions process and understanding that we are always the Casting Director with all the power, we can come to understand that we never need to be scared of any thoughts that might turn up? And the brilliant thing is, eventually those thoughts start to get the message: they audition less and less often. They've worked out where the power lies and that they can't scare or deter us any more, so they stop trying quite so hard.

And here's the magic of it: our subconscious brains notice that we keep sending away those thoughts we don't want, and so they get to work to provide us with what they've noticed we now want: thoughts that are worthy of playing the leading role in the most brilliant Thought Show ever.



Exercises

- 1) Write down five thoughts you have in one day. For each one, decide whether you'd give it a leading role, a supporting role, a minor role (no singing, no dialogue) or no role at all in your thought show. Explain your decision. Note: you can believe a thought and still choose against it. For instance, we might believe, 'I'm likely to fail', and choose against it at the Thought Audition stage because we know it will a) make us feel awful and b) cause us to give up — thereby guaranteeing failure, the very result we don't want.

- 2) Repeat the above exercise for a whole week. How do you feel at the end of the week?

- 3) Repeat task 1) above, but this time, after you've written down the five thoughts that turned up to audition, make a list of five that did not come for an audition, but that you would have cast in leading roles if only they had. Invite those thoughts to come and audition tomorrow. (Say it out loud, however absurd it feels: 'I hereby invite you to come for an official audition tomorrow, Thought That I Admire.')

- 4) For each of your chosen, invited thoughts, write down why they would be brilliant thoughts to play main parts in your Thought Show. How would they make you feel? What actions might they lead you to take? What brilliant results might they create for you?

- 5) The next day, let those chosen thoughts have their official auditions, and give them the great news: they've got all the best parts!

When we start to conduct Thought Auditions on a regular basis, *we cannot help but become acutely aware of what beliefs and ideas we are choosing for and against.* We stop being scared of sub-optimal thoughts occurring to us, because we are constantly demonstrating to ourselves that no thought can have power over us *unless we give it that power.*

We don't have to try and force a change in beliefs when that feels impossible. We can believe something and still choose against it. This is the magic of Thought Auditions.

Happy choosing, Casting Directors!

