

Cornerstone

Newsletter & Magazine November 2014

A Family of Friends - Developing the Cornerstones of Africa's Next Generation

THE POWER OF OUR THOUGHTS

One of the popular quotes in our Cornerstone family of friends has been this: "If you sow a thought you reap an action, sow an action you reap a habit, sow a habit you reap a character and in the end it is our character that determines our destiny."

It all begins with the thoughts we allow to dominate our minds. And it means that a person over time literally becomes what *he or she* thinks: Their character being the complete sum of all their thoughts.

You can't think one thing and become something else. If you allow yourself to think negative, worried, fearful thoughts, then you will become a negative, worried, fearful person. You cannot think defeat and expect victory. You can't think poverty, and expect wealth. You can't think the worst, and expect the best.

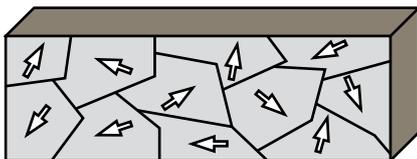
In Webster's Dictionary: To Think is defined as:

1. To employ the intellectual powers;
2. To call anything to mind; to remember;
3. To reflect upon any subject; to muse; to meditate; to ponder; to consider; to deliberate.
4. To form an opinion by reasoning; to judge; to conclude; to believe;
5. To purpose; to intend; to design; to mean.
6. To conceive; to imagine.
8. To plan or design; to plot; to compass.
9. To believe; to consider; to esteem.

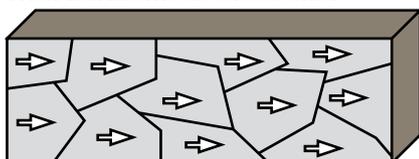
One of Jesus' main topics was faith. Faith itself involves thinking - it's a belief, a strong conviction that is confident that something not yet seen will come to pass. And Jesus taught that it was a power that could move mountains.

Fear and all the negative thoughts related to it act as a force just like faith is a power. If you give into fear and dwell on fear that fear can actually bring things to pass just like faith can bring things to pass. As, Job in the scriptures said, "*The thing I greatly feared came upon me.*"

Iron bar BEFORE Magnetization with chaotic electrons:



Iron bar AFTER Magnetization with harmonious electrons:



A magnet looks the same outwardly as any piece of metal... but the difference is on the inside... because all its electrons are aligned in one direction and that produces a power. We are like living magnets. When our dominant thoughts are aligned in one direction we attract what we are thinking about. This newsletter explores that process.



Inside



and...

- * Updates on AYLFGoma Gathering, and more!
- * Centerfold Pictorial
- * Thoughts from Tim

Head Office staff picture after our monday morning fellowship



Cornerstone Development Africa

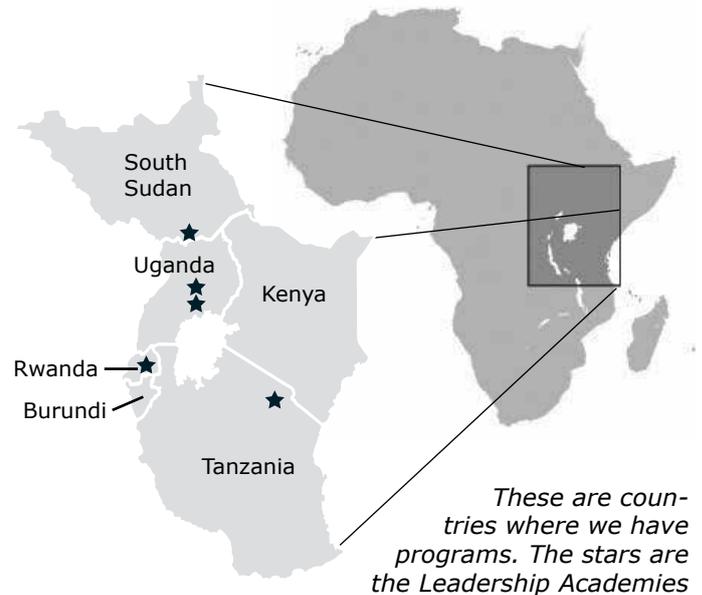
We are a family of friends in the spirit of Jesus committed to:

- * Equipping and advancing a movement of servant leaders with a shared vision for the positive transformation of their communities, nation and region.*
- * Compassion for the poor with a focus on young people.*
- * Working across the lines of culture and faith differences.*
- * Maintaining a long-term partnership with each other.*
- * Loving God and neighbor.*

Cornerstone Development was established in Uganda in 1988 to help in the rebuilding and development of the nation as it was emerging from a turbulent past. In recent years we have expanded to Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi and Southern Sudan. All our programs are directed towards helping under-privileged children, with a special emphasis on youth leadership development. Since its inception the work has steadily expanded to include over 2,000 young people today- in a variety of programs including five schools, ten homes for homeless kids, 4 homes for university youth and sports programs - all designed for providing love, education and character formation.

Our core focus is on "Developing the Cornerstones of Africa's Next Generation". That is, to raise up future leaders with a shared vision of positively transforming their communities and nations, as an outgrowth of their own personal transformation. Our approach involves creating loving, family-like environments in our schools and other programs for under-privileged young people, while empowering them with education and character formation in order for them to become leaders. Furthermore, the young people

2 coming through our programs are forming a movement that seeks to make a contribution to the betterment of



These are countries where we have programs. The stars are the Leadership Academies

society while promoting reconciliation across all that is dividing humanity. We as a community are a living model of this kind of unity in diversity, in that we are composed of all the different tribes, nationalities, cultures and religious backgrounds found in this part of the world.

In our character development curriculum we teach the timeless, universal principles of forgiveness, honesty, integrity, compassion, kindness, hard work, humility, and of service to the less fortunate, as exemplified in the teachings of Jesus and the perennial wisdom of all traditions, but without affiliation to any one institutional religious group.

See more online:
www.CornerstoneDevelopment.org

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Gertrude is a teacher at the Cornerstone Leadership Academy Uganda - Boys. This year she got married to another CLA teacher Simon Edakasi!



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Ronald is a teacher at the Cornerstone Leadership Academy Rwanda. He recently published his first book on achieving success in life.



Sulah Kibuka P. 6

CLA Uganda 2005 class. Sulah is a teacher at Cornerstone Leadership Academy Tanzania, and recently graduated with a Masters in Social Work.



Susan Akello P. 7

CLA Uganda Class of 2005 - Susan is a social worker and mentor, in charge of discipleship at the Leadership Academy of South Sudan.



William Rukundo P. 8

CLA Uganda class of 2004 - William is a teacher at Ekitangaala Transformation High School, and is the school bursar.



Vasco Musunguzi P.9

CLA Uganda Class of 2006 - Vasco currently serves as a head office coordinator for the Cornerstone Old Students Association in Uganda.



Peter Nkotanyi P. 10

CLA Rwanda class of 2010 - Peter does a lot of work with the Vision Conference and is in his last year of University, studying business admin.

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Stephen Barnaba P. 12

CLA Tanzania class of 2013 - Peter was a member of the pioneer class, and is now the Vice President of Mbeya University.



Sharon Kyama P. 13

Sharon was a founding member of the Africa Youth Leadership Forum in Uganda and has been a vital mentor figure for it ever since.

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Nathaniel Niyivuga P. 16

CLA Rwanda Class of 2009 - he was a member of the pioneer class, and has just graduated from University, studying economics.



Alice Kasule P. 17

Ekitangaala Transformation H.S. Class of 2007. Alice is very involved with EKOSA alumni and last year married CLA grad Peter Kasule.



Wilter Oloia P. 18

Wilter is a clinical officer who works with our Youth Corps department in the area of health and wellness with the kids.



Edmond Elasu P. 20

CLA Uganda Class of 2011 - Edmond is currently in University and works with our High-school program and Cornerstone Veritas.



Dorah Tengera. P.21

CLA Rwanda Class of 2011 - Dorah is currently doing a bachelors degree in Business Administration and is an active COSA member.

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Richard Hone P. 24

CLA Uganda Class of 2000 - Richard works in and around the Ekitangaala Ranch area in our community development program.



Lydia Nalujja. P. 25

CLA Rwanda Class of 2008 - Lydia is currently doing an internship with us at our Head Office here in Kampala.



Juliete Tabucia. P.26

CLA Uganda class of 2011 - Juliete is a class coordinator and a mentor in the Youth Corps with Bukoto Girls home in Kampala.



Tim Kreutter P. 28

Co-founder and Director of Cornerstone Development Africa. In this article, Tim writes about the "60,000 Thoughts" we have each day, and our holy responsibility to be good stewards of these creative opportunities.

Our core focus is 'youth leadership development' after the model of Jesus. So, in addition to our schools, all the various programs we run serve this focus by providing a practical "training ground" where graduates of our schools can learn to serve and pass on what they have received. Each year we put out two magazine's like this one. In the middle of this year we highlighted the Cornerstone Programs, and this one will highlight some of the People in our work.

Life Is A School...

Situations Are The Subjects



Cornerstone Leadership Academy Uganda

*Gertrude
Edakasi Nyangoma*

I have been a part of this family of friends now for six years, and have really internalized the great vision we pursue. In this, of the biggest things I have come to realize is that life is a school, and every day a learning session - the situations, whether bad or good, are the subjects we are studying. Ok, maybe it is because I am a teacher, but that's really how I see it!

What you learn from life, shapes who you are and who you will be, and above all, how you influence those around you, especially those that look up to you. But all this depends on how you respond - the choices you make - when faced with certain situations and experiences.

Many times when we are faced with difficult situations like disappointments, betrayal, failure, sickness, poverty, etc. - we tend to grieve a lot and become so negative about life, sometimes even ending up making choices that derail us from our vision. Yes, it is only human nature to respond in this manner, but then we must ask ourselves: How did Jesus manage to respond in these very situations without quitting his vision? At times we forget that every disappointment is really an appointment for growth, it only takes time! As disciples of Jesus we need never give up on higher values like patience, kindness, forgiveness, love, honesty, and faithfulness, which are so important in advancing us into the people that God wants us to become.

No-one get's to escape this school of life. It's not only us the mentors who experience these difficult situations but also the young people that God places in our hands to nurture - we are all in it together! At times many of them think that life is unfair, and that they can't do or become anything. They

4 As teachers and mentors, we are always challenged to

help these young people to think positively, to build self-confidence, and above all, be able to make proper decisions when faced with complex situations by offering up our own lives as examples. So that they are able to achieve their personal goals as well as furthering the shared vision of us influencing the world through mentoring others.

Since Jesus is the focal point in our programs, His life experiences and responses to certain situations should help us to grow and at the same time give us a model to mold these young people to become what God wants them to be. In His ministry many challenges came His way and they would have been a stumbling block to His vision but He overcame them because He was able to make proper choices and always thought positively.

An example is when He was choosing His companions. He preferred to associate with the less educated, less privileged and those of low status compared to their rich and educated counterparts. Perhaps because they were more humble, teachable and therefore easier to disciple/mentor. Another example was in the event of His temptation in the wilderness. Satan gave Him three juicy options: food, wealth and kingship. But Jesus humbly chose suffering, because His vision - the salvation of you and me - was far greater than the three mentioned above.

One last example is when His disciples complained of the people being hungry. He asked them what they had, and they brought him two fish and five loaves of bread. That was very little but to Jesus it was enough to feed the multitude, and even leave some leftovers at the end. As with Jesus and the fish and loaves in this instance, we each have something - however invisible it may seem - to change our situations.

What we have is how we choose to respond.

The three illustrations clearly show that Jesus was ever positive, rational in making choices and above all hopeful. This was probably why He was successful in fulfilling His vision. As teachers or mentors we are always challenged to emulate His examples so that we are able to make choices that do not contravene with our high values. And also so that we are be able to help those we mentor become better.

We should teach young people the values of hard work, self-control, faithfulness and other such virtues so that they are rational when faced with challenges like sexual temptations, greed for money, and how to exercise power effectively in a leadership position - just in case they are appointed into one.

As a mentor I feel fulfilled when I see those ideas lived out in young people as they leave the academy, better off spiritually, socially and academically than how they came in, despite what they went through in life.

The Feet Can Not Go

Where the Mind Has Not Been



Cornerstone Leadership Academy Rwanda

Ronald Mukasa

A person contains a force within him that is more powerful than anything in this world, and that is his mind. For the mind is the builder and the maker of our lives - it is one of the greatest forces on the earth, and it is like a magnet in the universe. Before we ever grasp something in our hands or see it with our eyes, we first encounter it in the mind. The creation of anything in our lives begins in our mind. The fulfillment of any dream we have also begins in our mind.

For example, no invention was ever made without first creating it in someone's mind: be it the light bulb, the locomotive, the airplane, the telegram, the telephone, the T.V, the radio, the camera, the computer, the iPod, the iPhone.

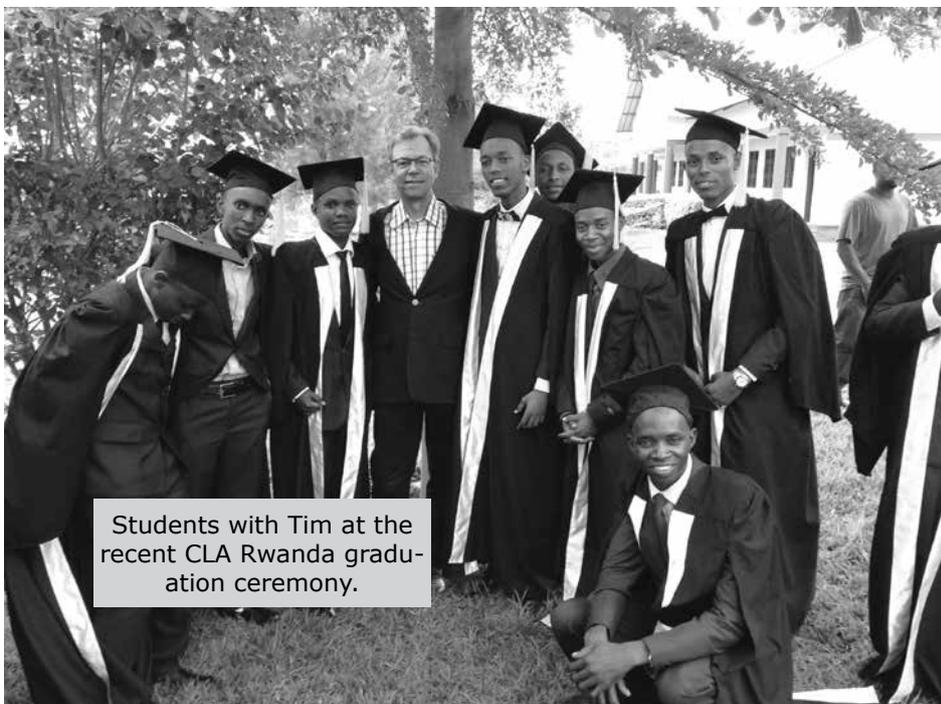
Nothing. None of them. They all first went through someone's mind before they were ever produced or achieved. And so you see, the things that we allow to enter into our mind have a great effect on our lives and on the lives of others - for what goes in must go out. If we allow good things to enter in our mind, it gives us the power to think right. And when we think right, we do right things. We make the right choices that affect us as well as others.

But when we allow bad things to enter into our mind, we think wrong. And therefore do wrong things. We make the wrong decisions that not only affect us, but also others negatively. As Jesus put it in Mark 7:21: "For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come--sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.

The feet cannot go where the mind has not been. They always follow the mind. You cannot go in a direction that you haven't somehow already painted in your mind. No. You go physically where you have already been mentally. The mind is key. That's why the above statement is true: we are made up of the information we feed our mind with.

Even our perceived value as individuals depends on the kind of information we feed our mind with. Our value perceived increases or decreases depending on what we feed our mind with. The more we feed our mind with valuable information the more valuable we become. We become better people who are better able to help others find solutions to their problems because of the valuable knowledge we now have. And the more we feed our mind with less value, the less valuable we become. We fill our minds with junk, knowledge that isn't that helpful to us or to others, and this makes us less able to help others find solutions to their problems, thus becoming less valuable to them.

In this life, all of us are trying to be valuable. We want to be valued. But, what we do not realize is that this doesn't happen because of the money we have, but the information we feed our mind with. The greatest choice that we can therefore ever make is to feed our minds with good information, which will not only build us but also build others people positively.



Students with Tim at the recent CLA Rwanda graduation ceremony.

There Are No Mistakes...

Only Lessons!



Cornerstone Leadership Academy Tanzania

Sulah Kibuuka

I believe it is not God's will for anyone to fail. He wants all of us to fulfill the ultimate plan He has for our lives. However, life is a series of decisions and every choice we make has a consequence attached to it.

We will either decide to go along with the higher purpose laid out for us, or we will go with the whims that our ego desires - which are based on selfish motives.

However, in a seemingly paradoxical way, I have seen that God can use the good, the bad, and the ugly parts of our lives to steer us in the right direction. I have really seen this come to fruition in my work with Cornerstone Tanzania - it has been a difficult journey, but through it all I have more clarity of vision than ever before!

Freewill or the freedom to make our own choices is a very important issue in our personal growth. If we never could make our own choices, we would never grow.

Each of us chooses to do the things that we do - unless we are in a situation where we have been totally stripped of our freedom. Then, we must do as those who have control over us command us to do. Every moment of every day we are faced with choices that affect our growth positively or negatively. Here are some examples:

6 1. What shall we eat? We can choose to eat healthy or just "pig out" on junk food.

2. Whom should we vote for? We can take the time to pray and study the candidates' positions and vote accordingly or we can refuse to vote. When we do not vote, we are actually making a choice to allow others to choose who shall rule over us.

3. Whom shall we marry? This is a serious life-long commitment and should never be entered into without God's guidance. Making this choice foolishly or based on emotion alone has brought much heartache to many a person.

4. What occupation should we pursue? Those making this decision strictly based on need or money issues will regret not seeking God about this issue. God has gifted every person with certain talents to adapt to the jobs that are suited just for them at the right times in their lives.

5. Should I return the money that was credited to my account by accident? Remember the Golden Rule: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." When only God is watching, what kind of choices do we make? He is looking for people He can trust, as He desires to use us in His work.

6. Should I purchase this item on credit? Do I really need this item or is it something I want, even though I cannot afford it?

These choices come to us each day, and it can be intimidating to know what the right thing to do is. But remember that there are no mistakes, only lessons, love yourself, trust your choices and everything is possible.

As a youth leader and mentor, I know it is hard to let others make choices for themselves. Some of the young people we work with look up to us for answers in all dimensions of life, but sometimes the best answer is to let them make the choice themselves! With this being said, it means that being a positive role model, and living well yourself, is the first step in guiding young people towards making better choices for themselves.

Thus it is important that we not make choices FOR these young people, but listen to them, understand them, empower them to shake off the rigidity of their mind and free them to make the best choices they can. Yet each choice carries a certain risk and consequence - and we have to be free to let people reap what they sow. But like I said, there are no mistakes... only lessons! So trust that they will make a better choice next time, just as you and I grow in wisdom with each new challenge we face in life.

Making Choices

Like A Follower Of Jesus



Leadership Academy South Sudan

Susan Akello

When I was growing up as a young girl in the remote village of Kitgum, I always thought that my mom was the one who chose what I did and where I went. And perhaps it was partly true. Today I understand however, that even as a child, one has to make certain choices.

As a young African woman today I know that in life I have to make choices all the time, and this is not very easy. In Africa, once a baby girl is born, she has expectations and limitations set before her in regards to the type of woman she should be. In many cases, by age 15 she is ready to be married off. One thing that made me choose what I am today is seeing older women and how they struggle in life. When I first became aware of this I knew that I wanted a different kind of life from theirs. I made up my mind that I was going to get a good education and break-away from the culture of oppression that they faced. And I knew that this different woman would have to make different kinds of

choices along the way. I am glad to say that I made those choices. But were they easy? No they weren't. Simon Sinek says, "There's no decision that we can make that doesn't come with some sort of...sacrifice." The choices I made involved sacrifices; choosing to do the right thing even when it was hard and painful. Every minute of every day, thoughts and feelings crossed my mind and heart, and they weren't all holy! But I had to choose.

What helped me choose? I chose basing on the person I wanted to be; her values, her principles and her beliefs. As a child of God my choices have always had to be aligned with the teaching of Jesus. And as children of God we have two great commandments; "To love the Lord with all our heart, mind and soul, and To love our neighbors as we love ourselves." These commandments help check our motives, thoughts, and choices, and they also shape our worldview.

Does that mean that we followers of Jesus always make the right choices? No, but when we realize that we have made the wrong one we acknowledge our mistake, repent and go back to following our values and principles. When we make choices there are consequences: There is either the reward of discipline for doing the right thing or there is the pain of regret for doing the wrong thing.

My choice to come to South Sudan was determined by my appreciation of the gift of love and care that had been given to me by my own mentors. I chose to give something back in return by encouraging my young "sisters" and "brothers" in this troubled land. Through encouraging them I have realized that when we love and care for other people we touch their hearts and change their lives completely. We give them a sense of hope and direction that enables them to make wiser choices. M. Gandhi said, "Where there is love there is life."

My deepest desire is to help these young people make right choices so they can grow into the women and men that God desires them to be. I believe that just as God made something out of my life, He can make something out of theirs, if they choose wisely. And to choose wisely requires them to know Jesus, and the truth of His message.

Therefore, as we encourage others to set their minds on a purpose much greater than themselves, we enable them to make good choices. I pray that with each day we do not throw away our lives to chances and temptations that miss the point, but rather give ourselves to those presented by God, our creator. We are products of our choices. With time these choices will transform us into the people we want to become.



Susan with students on campus at the school

Miracles Happen

When We Choose To Take Responsibility



Ekitangaala Transformation High School

William Rukundo

Greetings to all members of this family of friends. The year 2014 has been one of great improvements in almost all sections of Ekitangaala Transformation High-School. As a large family we cannot do without challenges here and there, but we still have achieved a lot in which we are grateful to the almighty God for.

For the last six years, I have served at the high school and I have seen people come and go from our staff, in part because it is in a remote area. But, the one important question that has kept me around as long as I have is: "If YOU cannot serve in this place, then WHO will?"

My stay has shown me that everything, every place, and every group of human beings can be lifted up if one chooses to make a difference there, and takes up the responsibility to make it happen.

When I look at Jesus' mission, I see that He choose to involve people in his work. He encouraged them to realize their role in every event or situation. Even for him to perform a miracle in their life – there was a responsibility they had to accept.

For example, the gospel of John records Jesus' first miracle at Cana. In this miracle, He told the people to fill six water jars. Their choice was to believe him and their responsibility was to fill the jars. Then Jesus would start from there.

In the same way, I believe that for miracles to happen in our lives, Jesus expects us to play our role in seeking to influence our world.

At the High School, we have endeavored to work on developing the mindsets of our students. When they learn to cultivate the right thoughts – they will be better able to deal with their present reality and they will learn leadership qualities that they will need at whatever level they go on to – later in life.

This job is not easy since the fruits are not quickly and easily realized. Many people have asked us tough questions about what is the impact of our Character Development teachings on the learners, especially when some of the students have been caught in the wrong. People can be quick to criticize our efforts saying it is not helping the students - because the fruits are not quickly seen. My encouragement to all my colleagues that are involved in this noble service has always been for us to just take a look at Jesus' ministry and be patient with ourselves as we are all learners to some degree.

After all, we don't eat of the fruit of a mango in the first year after the seed has been sowed! It can take about 4 years.

Jesus spent three years with His disciples, He performed miracles in their presence, but they often times acted as though they had not understood anything. For instance, after performing many miracles like calming the storm in their presence, healing the sick, feeding the great multitude, and many others - when they saw Him walk on water, they still thought He was a ghost. Even when He was arrested the night before His death, all of them ran away except Peter, who also kept a safe distance. All this shows us that while doing the work of developing humans, the effects may at first not be easily seen.

Today, after about two thousand years now, everybody in the world at least has seen the impact Jesus made. But at that time, it looked like nothing much was accomplished to most people.

Today, everybody ought to realize that the youth are faced with challenges of wanting to be successful without working hard and blaming others for whatever happens to them. This is why at the High School we endeavor to encourage our students to chose to get involved and to take responsibility for their choices and their mindsets - so that they can be active players in laying a good foundation for their generation.

Grades? Titles? Positions?

Who Succeeds In The End?



COSA Coordination Office

Vasco Musinguzi

I am inspired by people that have excelled in different areas of life. Especially, those who were not the most outstanding students when they were in high school - yet went on to greater achievements later on in life. But, it's actually not just the achievements that are great - it is really the person's life that was exceptional and this produced the achievement.

In past times, I used to ask myself: "Who succeeds and why do they succeed? What does it take to become the best version of myself I can possibly be? Is it the quality of the school I attended? Is it the grades I got, the titles or the number of academic acronyms after my name? What is it?"

People who I thought would succeed didn't. People with all the right qualifications let others down, and those who didn't seem like much at first on the outside, end up becoming the greatest people! "So, what's the deal?"

I am on a journey of realizing now that if we learn how to create our own breakthroughs, allow ourselves to move beyond our fears and limiting beliefs, then it is possible to accomplish all our goals, and realize our true desires. We are able to turn our dreams into reality, create fulfilling relationships, and even model the strategies of peak performers, to produce a significant difference in our lives - through the power of our own actions!

Many of us know stories about people who were at the top of their class, yet, somehow, never achieved success. In other instances, there are those who got mediocre grades,

or didn't go to the top schools, who became leaders in their chosen fields. It got me thinking. While some people experience a better all-around educational experience, the bottom line is, YOU are ultimately responsible for your success or failure, both in the work you do (your career) and in your life as a whole. It's all about what YOU create.

Looking at Jesus and how He made the choices that made Him the greatest man in history challenges me. He made choices surrounded by the same things that surround us—the things that influence our thinking, and make us take a given direction. He faced fear and at a certain point He wished there was a short-cut or an alternative that could be availed for him to fulfill His purpose on earth. According to Matthew 26:39 (KJV), it says, "...and He went a little further, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt..."

Even after hearing a lot about the role of thoughts in our discipleship program at CLA, in reality I acknowledge that it's not that simple. It's a challenge. And there are always two sides to the coin. I cannot always do it on my own. I sometimes need someone else to remind me about the way I am thinking.

As soon as we get up in the morning we usually get busy doing things and let our thoughts flow freely as the day unfolds. The amount of information our brain processes in a day is unbelievable. And so, it is not easy to constantly monitor our thoughts and make sure they are always positive. Because not everything we see and hear is positive, all we can determine is the WAY we process both the positive as well as negative information. This we do by being more conscious of the effects that the information has on us.

Every time you notice that you're about to harbor negative thoughts - you can make a conscious decision on how much energy you want to put into it and stop the thought process from distracting you from your higher purpose. You can either dwell on negative thoughts and sink into depression or you can transform them - thereby constructively producing a better outcome for you.

James Allen was quoted saying, "You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you." Thoughts are forces; they change one's direction and in so doing even influence the course of history.

The Kind Of Fruit

Depends On The Seed



Vision Conference / High School Leadership Development

Peter Nkotanyi

One of the gifts we as humans have like no other created being is our ability to think – and in fact this is part of our spiritual nature! God created us in his image so that we can create with our minds even as He does with His will. However, in order to use our thoughts to create, we must first believe that it is possible to do so – this takes self-esteem and courage.

Every person thinks, but not every person thinks positively and believes in the realization of their thoughts. It is a choice that one must make. Everything we see under the sun that wasn't created by our heavenly father is the realization of the thoughts of men.

A tree will bear fruits depending on the type of seed. You cannot reap an apple fruit when you sowed a mango seed. This same principle applies to our thoughts and choices – the kind of outcomes depends on the kind of input.

An example of this principle at work was an idea that the Headmaster of Cornerstone Leaderships Academy in Rwanda came up with for transforming youth - in order to transform society. A thought called Youth Impact Mission (YIM) was envisioned hoping to reap a particular harvest. Through Youth Impact Mission Clubs (the seeds) were planted in different high schools and we hoped to bring about change in their neighboring communities (the harvest).

So far, this is some of what we yielded in different schools:

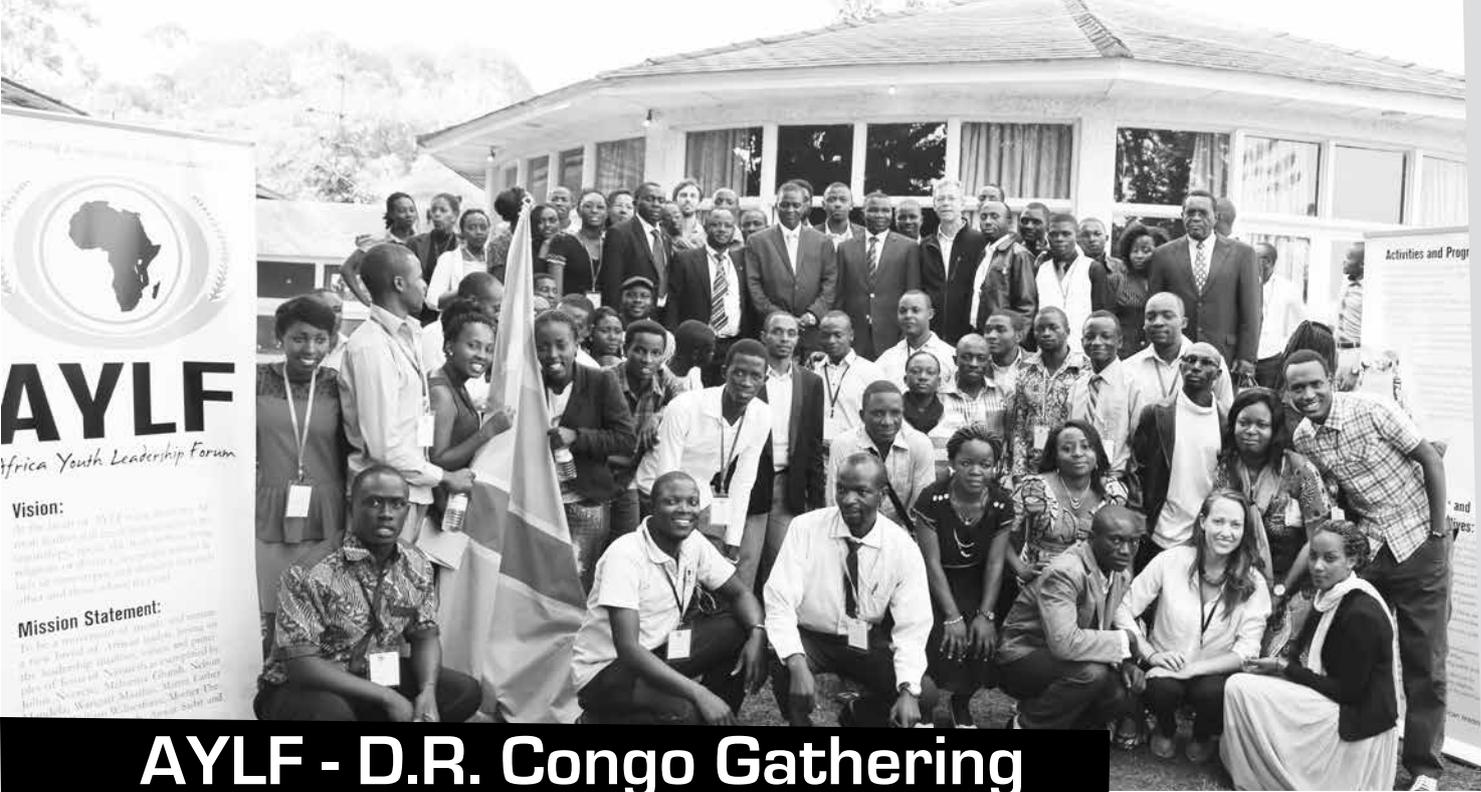
1. GAHINI : The students at Gahini constructed a house for a needy family, which impacted the family and even the neighbors greatly. They have also cooked for sick people in the hospital who had no food. And now, their school cleaners join them in fellowship because these students help them clean the school on both Saturday and Sunday.

2. ECOLE D'ART: The students at Ecole D'Art paid school fees for their colleague who had been chased out of school for defaulting. They also cleared bushes around River Sebeya which were the cause of a high rate of malaria in the surrounding community. Now this community is celebrating the reduced rate of malaria.

The above examples are proof that the development and subsequent happiness of a society is the output of those who have developed their thoughts into good ideas. So, if you are seeking change, set an intention and then align your behaviors with your desire.

I hold the belief that my thoughts are capable of having a significant impact on my life. And, I feel a strong sense of responsibility for what I am creating with my thinking. It took a long time, but I feel I am slowly learning how to align my dominant thoughts with what I believe is the greatest good of all, so that one day my whole life will be aligned with that purpose. May God bless you all as you choose to think highly and believe in the realization of your thoughts.





AYLFGathering - D.R. Congo Gathering

In late August this year, we held our first Africa Youth Leadership Forum (AYLFGathering) in Goma, Congo. Over 130 University student leaders came from Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya and Burundi for the 3 day Gathering.

Our good friend, Hon. Azarius Ruberwa, the former Vice President of Congo and organizer of the Congo Prayer Breakfast, was with us for two nights - generously giving up his time and attention to these young leaders. We also had the top government official in the region - the Governor of North Kivu - Hon. Julien Kihongya who stressed the continued need for such events to bring the young leaders in the region together.

This is the first time we have gone into Congo and we chose Goma because it has been one of the main hot spots in

what is called the 'Africa Great Lakes Conflict Zone' of Rwanda, Congo, Burundi and Uganda.

Congo has seen the highest number of deaths of any country in the world due to conflict and war since World War II - an estimated 5 million. When this figure is added to the 1 million who died in Rwanda, another 1 million in Uganda and maybe half a million in Burundi - over this same period - the need for bringing together the future leaders of this conflict prone region in the world - to develop friendships and the spirit of brotherhood - is clearly, overwhelmingly crucial.

Tim first spoke on the guiding principles behind the AYLFGathering and the Prayer Breakfast Movement worldwide - particularly how we can find common

ground and shared values in the precepts and person of Jesus. And in another session he spoke on the topic of "Inside-Out Leadership."

Other speakers included, Christine Musiadizi described by some as the "Mother Teresa of Goma," Prof. Kamana, Eric and Dani as well as Azarius Ruberwa. Azarius spoke on the topic of Relational Leadership and shared his experiences on how in leadership it is the friends and connections you have developed that will in large part determine your effectiveness. Azarius expressed the need to extend the AYLFGathering initiative to several parts of Congo especially taking to Kinsasha where they hold the annual National Prayer Breakfast. Dani and Eric Kreutter co-shared in a session on gender issues, as rape as a weapon of war and violence against women has been a very sad feature of the conflict in this region.

Like most of the AYLFGathering, ample time was given to small group sessions for the young leaders to get to know and learn from each other more in-depth. All in all, it was a really great time that inspired all participants to work towards a peaceful and prosperous future. There is hope for East Africa - if the young leaders can avoid the legacy of fear and conflict that had preceded their generation in this part of the world.



Mrs. Musiadizi speaking



Hon. Ruberwa speaking

Who Jesus Thought He Was

Determined

What He Did



COSA Tanzania / CLA Alumni

Barnaba Stephen

My journey at CLA (Cornerstone Leadership Academy) Tanzania began in 2011 with a great hope of studying hard and reaching university. During my time there, I was able to cultivate my potential as a unique individual—and a good leader. It was then that I first realized that I could influence the people around me because of the kind of thoughts I had in my mind. This in turn influenced the choices I made.

As a member of the pioneer class at CLA-Tz, I faced many challenges. We had many doubts about things because everything was so new, and in a way - we had to forge our own new path. But we overcame these challenges and managed to learn quite a lot from them. I served as the health minister on the Student Council.

Through such experiences, I began to envision my future. I had the dream to become Guild President of the Students' Government when I joined University. This dream began to materialize in my first year at campus when I contested for the Presidential seat at my university; St. Augustine University of Tanzania, Mbeya.

The race for the seat was tight. My opponent and I tied in votes both in the first and second round of the election. Because attaining the responsibility seemed (and in fact was) important to both of us, the university management met us both, and decided to make one of us Guild President and the other, Guild Vice President.

der to calm things down, I decided to let my counterpart take on the position of Guild President while I settled for Guild Vice President, applying Habit #4 of Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, which says, "Think Win-Win." I thought "Win-Win" in that moment, and because of it I was able to make that bold choice.

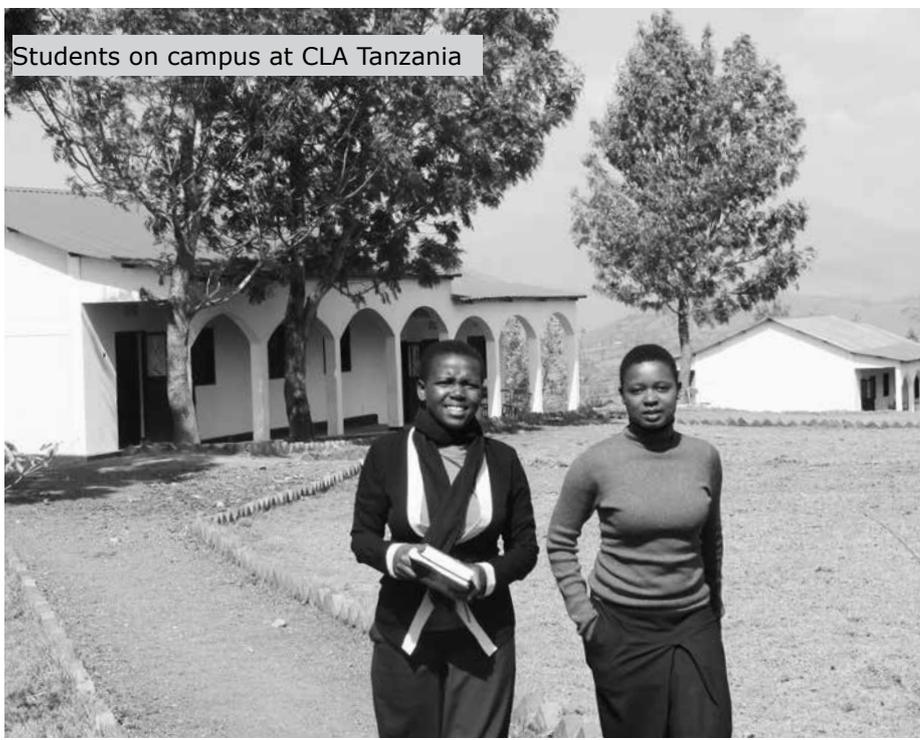
Jesus' life, for instance, was so impacting because He chose to serve others in humility, and to love everyone - even those who stood against him. This was because He knew that, like His Father, He should love all people. He had the greatest love of all in Him, that love of the Father and that is a kind of love without conditions.

And he came to teach others to develop this kind of love.

My leadership experience has enabled me to inspire many people around me, especially my fellow youth. Many of them have come to me asking how I have made it. I often tell them to have three things, which are: Consciousness (kujitambua), Self-awareness (kujifahamu), and Ability to make right decisions (kujiweza). (These are Swahili words.)

I have encouraged them to not only focus on what is for the betterment of their own lives, but also for the lives of others as well. And I always tell them that the choice they are making now will reflect later in their lives.

Throughout this journey, I have realized that successful people tend to do the things that other people aren't willing to do. And they do them heartily, until they achieve their desired success. It is true what Ben Carson says: "If you think you can, you can."



Students on campus at CLA Tanzania



Africa Youth Leadership Forum Alumna

Sharon Kyama

I Am My Choices

My Attitudes & My Thoughts

Two things that you should know about me before you proceed to read this piece:

- 1) *I am no biblical connoisseur.*
- 2) *I am no motivational speaker.*

I am a lawyer, and in law, we call this a disclaimer—I issued it here because I am afraid of being held to a very high standard. This is something I continue to struggle with as a young person but I am proud of myself for not turning down the opportunity to share my own understanding of the theme with you. A part of me still wants to end right here but I am choosing not to.

The first thing in life that we always need to conquer is fear; fear affects our choices and thought process. As young people, it is common knowledge that many a time we struggle to make sense of the world around us. For example, we may be afraid of the future - questions like “*will I succeed in life?*”, “*will I meet the right marriage partner?*”, “*will I ever get that career break?*” etc. - are part of our day to day dilemmas.

We must be able to take charge of our lives without succumbing to fear. We can only do this by trusting God’s plan for our lives. In Jeremiah 29:11, The Lord said: “*For I know the plans I have for you,*” declares the Lord, “*plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*” The question, however, is: “*Is our faith strong enough to believe in these words and completely trust God with our lives?*” I have personally had moments when I got scared and panicked because I thought God had abandoned me. I will admit that it is in such moments of extreme fear that I have made some bad decisions. Nobody is saying that you should not be afraid but rather; do not let fear determine your path and choices.

As young people, we must always remember that we are in charge of our destiny. I draw this lesson from my favorite story in the Bible—The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), we all know the story. I like to think that the Prodigal Son was a young man in his 20s—it makes his story more relatable. In this parable, Jesus offers us the greatest lessons on choices. For example, despite all the pleas from his father, the prodigal son still made a conscious decision to leave his father’s home. His story reminds me of our stubborn youthful moments; moments when we lose our way and make wrong decisions. The prodigal son however, later makes a U-turn and returns home.

Such is life—we have been given the prerogative over our destiny, thoughts and choices. It is entirely up to us. As young people, it is important that we carefully think through every decision we make in life and also understand that it is never too late to change our minds should we realize that we are on the wrong path.

I recall about two years ago, I had reached that point in my life when I wanted to quit my job and pursue further studies. The truth is that this seemed to be the trend because most of my friends had done just that and I wanted something similar! I quickly sent in applications to two different universities and sure enough, I was admitted but could not get any scholarship no matter how many applications I submitted. I had no choice but to continue working albeit very unhappily.

To say that I was frustrated is an understatement. For a moment, I stopped praying because I figured, “*Why pray when God clearly does not listen?*” I plummeted into negativity. If it was not for my mother who talked to me about not letting one low moment knock me down for life, I would be lost. Sometimes we need to be rescued by somebody. Therefore, we need to invest in relationships in order to surround ourselves with a strong support structure - be it in the form of friends or family, for those rainy days when we need encouragement.

In the end I chose not to give up and reapplied and as luck would have it, this time round I received a fully paid scholarship! I am not saying that things always work out well like that. Sometimes it gets hard and nearly impossible but we have to learn to hang in there and seek the Lord for strength. We must always remember Matthew 19:26 where Jesus said - “*...for human beings this is impossible, but for God all things are possible*”. It is pointless to drown ourselves in self-pity and negative thoughts. Our choices and attitudes towards both the good and bad things that life throws at us will determine how high we soar.

Cornerstone

Newsletter Pictorial



Africa Youth Leadership Forum - with Sister Rosemary (center)



AYLF small group fellowship



Roger's and Gloria's wedding



Panelists at the "Let's Talk" event



Coach Stone with participants at the Global Leadership Summit



Allan and Winnie looking sharp!



A trip to the Entebbe Zoo with AYLFI!



Students at the Leadership Academy of South Sudan



Northern Uganda COSA retreat



Muslim / Christian relations workshop



West Nile COSA retreat



Eastern Uganda COSA retreat

A Family of Friends!

Take Every Thought Captive

In A Constructive Way



CLA Rwanda Alumni - Class of 2009

Nathanael Niyivuga

Many people make choices every day without thinking twice about what they are doing. Then these same people wonder why nothing is changing in their life or that things are not going the way they want them to. This is because they don't realize the power that they have to change their lives through the power of choice.

From my own experience and testimony, I used to have no clear picture of what my life in the future would be like. I hadn't yet discovered the reason why I exist on this planet. I just thought that I existed for nothing at all - eventually however, I realized that in some ways, we exist to make choices! For in making choices we partner in creation, together with the Creator, in bringing the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven - as Jesus put it. That's when I realized that I have an important role to play in this world that begins with me taking myself seriously and taking responsibility for the resources entrusted with me - beginning with my thoughts, choices, and actions.

I started focusing on making the right choices and getting advice from the right people. I have to say that I am focusing on what I wish my life to be in the future and it is totally different from the way it was before.

16 I am seeing more and more of my life transformed

today because of the better choices I am now making. And this has been a great witness to me of how indeed our choices and thoughts play an important role in shaping our reality.

For example, if I had chosen, to smoke weed and drink liquor all the time, I am sure I would not be where I have reached now. I don't think that I would even be writing this. I would perhaps be sitting in my home village still smoking weed and drinking liquor - generally living a hopeless life. But because of a right choice I made somewhere at some point in life, today I am living a much more fulfilling life. A splendid life in fact! I know where I am going and I know that a great life, perhaps even greater than the one I am enjoying right now, awaits me there. I believe my dreams will be realized. My vision, my life's purpose - a gift given to me by God - will come to fruition. It will be fulfilled.

For many this is still a challenge. Most of us still think that our choices and thoughts don't play a big role in what we become, the dreams we have and their realization. But I want to challenge us today to change the way we think and be wary of the choices we make, because, ultimately, whether you believe or don't, it is from our choices, and our thoughts that our reality is born. Our reality is based on our choices and thoughts. If we make the right choices, have the right kind of thoughts, our reality will be affected positively; and the reverse is true for wrong choices.

It is in this vein, therefore, that I urge all of us to make the right choices in life and also start 'taking captive every thought' 2 Cor. 10:5 - in a constructive manner.

When we do that, when we acknowledge that our choices and thoughts are very important, that they play a big role in what we become, and the wonderful dreams we have and whether we realize them or not. It is a question of consciously tuning our choices and thoughts - based on the dreams we have and then making sure our actions are in line with them.

We shall then be able to stay on course and think positively even when a time comes when the future seems dim, and our dreams so far away. Nothing will stop us so long as we stay in control of our choices and thoughts. We shall be able to accomplish almost anything.

The Creative Forces

Of Thought & Choice



Ekitangaala Transformation H.S. - Alumni

Alice Kasule

A popular Biblical saying goes, *"As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is."* (Proverbs 23:7, KJV) and Robert Kennedy once said that, *"There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask: Why? I try to dream of things that never were, and ask: Why not?"*

Looking at these two quotes above, I am delighted to conclude that there is a lot of creative force in one's ability to think and make choices. In fact, these seemingly inconsequential habits of choice and thought - are likely the starting point of any great accomplishment that has ever been made in our world! For before we act in any way, it has to begin with a thought, which then yields the good or bad choices that we make.

I am a registered nurse and midwife. This did not happen overnight or by accident, but it is a product of a choice that I made way back while in Primary Three, mainly be-

cause of the admiration for my aunt who took care of me when I had a stomach pain! Indeed, people around us can influence or inspire us in many different ways, but don't think that they will make your dreams come true on your behalf! I am where I am today because of a series of thoughts and choices... and yes, also a lot of hard work!

During my days in school, I committed to serving as a positive influence to my fellow students. All my days in school since Primary School were days of service as a student leader, in different areas of responsibility. In doing so, I have had delightful experiences of influencing students to make right choices regarding their sexuality, their life's vision, and the sense of purposeful living.

My latest experience was in the Nursing school where I served as the head of Nurses' Christian Union. During this time I discovered that to lead is not about being on the front, it's about supporting followers to think, walk, talk and act in the rightfully agreed upon direction. This is the major course of leadership, influencing people to make right choices. This is how everyone can become more and achieve more.

Alvin Tofler once said that: *"The illiterate and confused people of the future will not be the person who cannot read, it will be the person who does not know how to learn to make right choices."*

A few months ago I met a young lady, Cynthia (not her real name), after her job interview. Her interviewer had apparently requested for a one million bribe in order to get her hired for the job. She had been so disgusted by this. And she was confused and discouraged because she had not been able to pay it.

I sat her down and encouraged her never to make the grave mistake of paying a bribe for a job. She confided in me, I comforted her; we prayed and then parted ways. She was not hired although her counterparts were, but she was inwardly happy that she had made the right choice.

Alice and Peter Kasule's wedding last year

This October, the same company rang her and got her hired for the same post at absolutely no pay at all! She called me and testified that God is indeed a good God. Applying critical thinking and making the right choices in life may not be the quick route to getting what you want, but you will get there in the end, and do so with more genuine lasting power.



Seeking The Silver Lining



Youth Corps Mentoring Homes

Wilter Olofia

A while back I had a chat with a young girl whose name I will not mention in this article for purposes of confidentiality. From her story it was evident that life didn't offer her much to be proud of. Growing up, she bounced from a foster family, to an orphanage, to a slum dwelling, and back - nothing seemed to be a lasting solution. One could almost predict the direction that this girl would head in, yet I sensed something was very different about this girl.

Indeed, she was beaten but she was not yet broken! Somehow she survived all this trauma by finding the secret of seeing the silver lining in the storm. Today she recounts about her orphanage experience with a pretty smile across her face:

"...Auntie, this lady (who ran the orphanage) was very mean to us. She denied us food, clothing donated to us by visitors; and she was unnecessarily abusive! We had to run away from this orphanage. However Auntie, this lady did something very remarkable. She introduced us to Jesus! We can now see the true joy of living in Jesus and the satisfaction this gives us in our inadequacies. Even though she was hard on us, this lady gave us something I am eternally grateful for."

This kid left me puzzled at her perspective of life. She had chosen to see the same experience that nearly all of us would all deem abusive, in a different way: She saw the bright side of it. She saw the glass half full rather than half empty! This had to do with a deliberate choice she made. How could this girl, who would have focused on denigrating her tormentor, choose to see the blessing that she was to them?

Chris Widener writes: *"There are lots of things in this life that we don't get to choose. On the other hand, there are lots of things in this life that we do get to choose. Our attitude is one of the things that we get to choose. Nobody else lives inside our brain. Nobody else controls what or how we think. It is up to us, moment by moment, to choose what our attitude is. It is up to us to determine how we will look at and perceive the world around us. It is up to us to decide how we will react to our world around us"*.

This, I have learnt this statement to be true in every circumstance: **"Attitude determines one's altitude."**

Imagine someone stepped on you in a group meeting and did not have the courtesy to apologize. You could travel deep within your mind to a dark place, thinking why they did so; breeding ideas of how they don't like you; how they always think they are above everyone else. Or, you could choose to look at your foot, dust the dirt away and conclude that you had your foot in the wrong place at the wrong time!

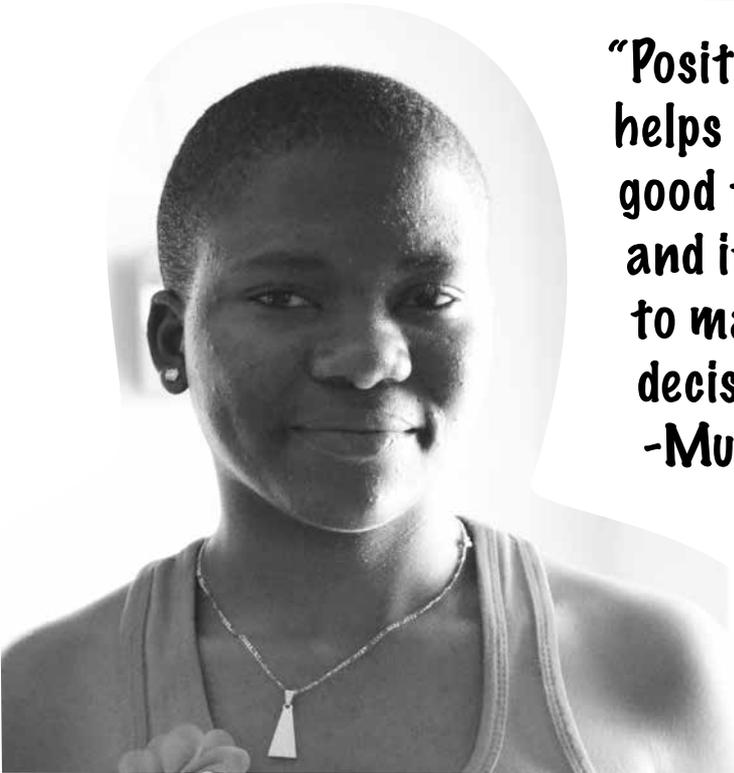
In the first instance, you are likely to feel deeply saddened because you do not feel loved, you do not feel respected and you do not feel important. While with the later, you are likely to quickly resolve this situation, move forward and begin expressing yourself with your friends more freely, enjoying the rest of the evening.

What you focus on magnifies. Such is the power of attitude. John C. Maxwell teaches that though attitude is not everything, attitude is the main thing. Attitude is the change maker in a person's life!

As I engage with young people in the Youth Corps homes and the various programs we run, I have keenly observed young people who didn't seem to offer much - turning out to be very influential and productive members of their community. I see in their eyes the hunger to be believed; the hunger to be trusted; the hunger to be loved and a hunger to make a difference in their lives and in the lives of those around them. These kids teach me about faith, trust and hope; all the different aspects that influence ones attitude.

Grab the lens of a positive attitude and begin to see opportunity where others see problems. Celebrate the gift of life rather than mourn the scarcity. Celebrate the gift of each other rather than see the inadequacies of each other. Laugh when things seem so surprisingly odd rather than sulk. Choose to have a constructive attitude! It's the one weapon the enemy cannot steal! It's inside of you. Nurture it and it will grow!

Youth Corps Kids



**"Positive thinking helps me to gain good friends and it helps me to make good decisions."
-Muyingo Verin**



"I have realised that thinking pessimistically minimises one's chances of succeeding in life."

-Nakanjako Scoiva



"My mom believed in me and that helped me to believe in myself. Believing in myself helped me to achieve many things."

-Winnie Awor



STONE

Celebrate Your Differences

And The World Will Too!



High School Leadership Development Initiative

Edmond Elasu

I believe the whole process of living life is characterised by the continuous weighing of options that result in different combinations of choices at different times of life. I have watched this take place in my own life for some time now, and I know that however long it takes for the seeds to bear fruit, the product of successful outcomes has always been a result of quality of the intention along the way.

There is a debate where some people think that it is external events that shape us, others think that we ourselves are the ones who shape events. Maybe it is a combination of both, but I think that we control the degree to which we shape or are shaped by others - by the degree of our willingness to exert ourselves.

In this, there are two sides of the coin I want to look at: our actions, and our choices.

Our Actions: Sometimes in life, some people have characteristics about themselves that make them different than others, and the world can either praise those differences or curse those differences - but which one will it be and why? I have noticed in my life that the world believes exactly what you put out there. If you celebrate your differences, your uniqueness, then the world will too. But if you are embarrassed about your differences and uniqueness, then the world will not likely celebrate you.

For example, when we were starting the High School Leadership Development Initiative, it was difficult for people to imagine what it would be like, and it was hard for people

to take our grand vision seriously. Others didn't understand our unique approach, and tried to make it something else. But the truth is that we focused on our unique vision, we had the confidence in ourselves then walked optimistically into the future - and along the way people joined us enthusiastically!

Our Choices: Other times, it is not just about showing up and being confident, it is about making a tough decision between two options. For example, for one thing to live sometimes another thing must die: it could be a habit, an attitude or a perspective that is not very healthy in either your personal life or public life. Or it could be that you have the choice to harbour anger towards a particular situation when in fact it serves a useful purpose and it would be better to move on.

These things take a lot of self-awareness sometimes to see, and they take a lot of courage to confront and tough choices must be made to change. But when you finally recognize that truth, then you will understand the true meaning of forgiveness of yourself and others. From this point you will finally be free. And so, we must be open to different points of view and perspectives from others. For when you think yours is the only way, you will always judge others, become rigid and unaware of the broader diversity of options that God has for us in life. In this way, I have realized that the road of righteousness and the road of arrogance can be two parallel roads that can intersect at various times throughout a person's life. And many times, we are so blinded that it is hard to recognize one road from another. But Jesus taught that the road to righteousness is paved with the humble love of humanity, while the road to arrogance is paved with the love of self.

Thus, let us be intentional and confident in making good choices, but also humble and open to new perspectives and opportunities when they arise. I wish each one of you a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2015. God bless you all.



Choice Is The Path

Towards Realizing Vision



CLA Rwanda Alumni

Dorah Tengera

The end result of one's life is not defined by what they have or don't have, but by the choices they make in their daily life. In other words, the reality of who we are today is the sum of choices we make in our everyday life. And the realization of who we envision ourselves to be one day -will only come with the quality of our choices.

I personally believe the best choice I ever made has been my journey with Jesus. This is because it is a choice that informs many more choices with positive impact, and I am who I am today because I chose to walk the way of Jesus wholeheartedly. Because of this, I joined different ministries like the choir at CLA Rwanda - that led to another opportunity of leading the Sunday fellowship at CLA. And I count that as a big blessing because it contributed much to what I am today. For instance, I am now the GBU (Christian Union) secretary at my University.

I like the verse: "As a man thinks....so he is." Proverbs 23:7. I do believe that our thoughts have shaped who we are today.

But, whatever we speak also counts. If we harbor negative thoughts then our words will always be negative and bring about a negative impact to not only us but even those around us. Jesus said: "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." Luke 6:45

Our thinking often limits us from influencing our society. When we think we have nothing to offer in someone's life - we won't even try - simply because of our

negative mindset. Again, we often think we cannot make an influence until we are appointed as leaders or given a responsibility. But we can choose to be influential even when we don't hold any position of leadership or any sort of responsibility. It's our choice to influence others, or not.

But to begin to influence others we must first develop confidence in ourselves. This enables us to have the positive mindset with which we can then impact people. It is this positive thinking that propels us to that point of influence.

Each one of us here on earth has a mission and purpose. It may be small or big but it has the power to influence the life of another individual, or even the whole of society. I find this idea so inspiring and motivating. Each of us has been graced with a mission and there is a divine plan for achieving this vision. God had this vision and this plan set for us before we were born, before we were even conceived, says Jeremiah 29:11. It is our right choices that keep us on the path towards realizing our vision in life.

But I have also realized that influencing others requires love. We must love people to positively influence them. It is usually hard to influence people that you don't love. As long as people know you genuinely care about them, they will always be open to your influence.

Loving them requires us to lay aside pride and put on humility, which allows us to also be open to the prospect of learning from those we want to influence. I had the privilege of working as a Class Coordinator in 2011. One thing that helped me hold on, to maintain a spirit of love and togetherness in my class - was my choice to make humility my guideline. Because of it, I was open to learning from those I led and a good connection was built between us. Each person is a unique individual, who has their own great experiences to share. We must let them share these. And we must never let our differences hinder us from leaving a positive impact on them.

In summary, it is those who have a positive mind who will always work hard to achieve their goals and in so doing, influence others. But in order to have this mind we must first grow confident in ourselves by meditating on thoughts to build us up. With a positive mind, we will achieve the best because we will always feel a push to work hard to realize our visions and our heart's desire. But Above All, living with Jesus...we shall live our life to the full.

Camino de Santiago (Real Camino Francés)



A Pilgrimage

The Beauty Is In The Journey Not The Destination

A Story From Tim

In October, Cathy and I took a week off and walked for 100 kilometers along the "El Camino de Santiago," also known as the Way of St. James. This a pilgrim trail in France and Spain.

The 800 kilometer trail has been in existence for many centuries. It runs through a long string of old villages and churches that are about 5k apart, where you can usually find inexpensive meals and lodging for pilgrims. It is believed that the remains of James the brother of Jesus are kept in the Cathedral of Santiago and that is why pilgrims began trekking there over the past 900+ years.

First of all, this was an experience of shifting away from the busy-ness, rush and stress that characterizes modern city life; an experience of disconnecting from the virtual reality of computers, smart phone and TV screens; an experience of returning to one of the most basic functions for which the human body is designed - walking for 4-5 hours a day; An experience of 'walk-

ing by faith' - not knowing exactly where you are going to eat your next meal or spend your next night.

From the physical standpoint it brought home the realization that our bodies belong to nature. They are more attuned to natural environments found in the more than 90% of the world's land surface that is still rural, country-side...and less so to the 10% of the land surface that is urban - where we now spend nearly all our lives.

Our bodies are also designed for movement. Life is always characterized by movement, so when we are simply walking - all the body systems - the circulatory, respiratory, muscular system etc. - come to a more harmonious, healthy rhythm and state and all the systems seem to benefit.

For centuries people having been taking pilgrimage to holy places, like Mecca or Jerusalem, with the expectation that when they reach there - they will be blessed, be healed, be transformed, etc.

The problem now-a-days is that you can hop on a bus, train or airplane and reach such places in a few hours. But, I often hear there is a let-down in what is encountered on arrival. For example, I have friends who have been to the birthplace of Jesus in Bethlehem and they return disappointed on what they found: a small plaque of some sort in a highly commercialized environment.

In the past it wasn't like this. Pilgrim journeys took weeks and months to complete. And in that process something important was realized...it was actually the journey itself that was transformational to one's soul...not what was found at the destination.

I'm suspecting that something similar may be true of our journey of life. We are often longing to reach heaven and experience its' many blessings. But, it may well be that we will look back - and realize that it was actually life's difficult journey that contained the greatest blessings - that turned our trials into gold for our souls.

Think about it: If heaven had all we needed – why would we need to be born at all in the first place? Why bother to take up a body and live these funny human lives with all their dramas? There must be something that we are gaining by taking this wild pilgrimage, something important that made us come here in the first place.

In reality we are spirit beings, so to find your self in human form on planet earth means we came here from somewhere else. And, somewhere along the line - we all made the choice to move into the adventure of this dense material world we call 'physical reality'. But, why?

Unfortunately, from where we stand now we can't remember where this journey began from and why we took it in the first place?? And that is part of the human experience - to try to discover purpose and meaning in being here.

But, instead we like to complain about our 'bad luck' or we spend our lives mostly pre-occupied with the detours of chasing pleasure, fame and money – all of which have no lasting value to the soul.

In this way we can waste year after year- going in circles instead of advancing. And, in this way, many die without making much spiritual progress.

But, on the grander - 'eternal scheme of things' there must be something of value that can be gained from



this pilgrimage of life. There must be something we gain from this experience that can be put to good use somewhere else – somewhere beyond what we can currently envision from this plane. Otherwise, really what is the point of it all?

I have come to the conclusion that this physical world is not necessarily lesser or 'worse' than other realms - it just serves a different purpose. In fact, we are told that, in the beginning when it was all being set up - after God created it all, he sat back, took a long look at it and said: "Hmmm....it's Very Good!" (Genesis 1:31)

This world contains conditions that are particularly ideal for the growth of the soul, why else would we have chosen it? There must be certain soul qualities like courage, persistence, faith and wisdom that can only be acquired here rather than in other realms.

So, maybe we should not be so eager to get out of here – to get off the journey and fly off to our next destination.

And, maybe it's true as one sage put it: *"We don't go to heaven, we grow to heaven."*

The Apostle Paul in one of his letters talks about being 'caught up to the third heaven.' So, there must be many levels...as Jesus said: *"In my father's house are many mansions."*

And, it would only make sense that we are not fit to dwell in the higher spiritual realms until we have qualified for it by a substantial transformation of heart and mind. And this seems to require some significant amount of "ground-work."

So in the final analysis, one of the greatest and most difficult skills to be learned is to walk through it all - all the storms, dark nights and stony paths - while living fully in joy at the same time, while holding this higher perspective. As, the Master in the art of living (Jesus) put it: *"In this world you will have trials...but be of good cheer."*

When we really internalize this, we will understand: Eternal life begins now. And although salvation depends on faith - the growth of the soul depends on faithfulness: Faithfulness to walking out this pilgrimage up to the end and learning the lessons for soul development along this unpredictable journey.



Your Decision Is

Your Victory!



Ekitangaala Ranch / Community Development

Richard Hone

One thing that really energizes me in the work I do with community development in the villages around the Ekitangaala Ranch are the times when I can help some make a better choice about their lives that positively impacts their future.

For instance, earlier this year, I came to meet a young man and learned about the family that he was brought up in. Although he deeply respected his mother for single handedly bring up the children with out their father, the boy messed up and did some things that he shouldn't have done. There was a big separation between him and his mother because of this. But after some encouragement that I offered him, he vowed to never get off track again, and restored the relationship with his mother.

In another case, a young woman and her sibling had lost their mother to HIV/AIDS. They could have given up right then and there and resorted to unhealthy lifestyle choices, but out of the meager resources that they had, they decided to contact me. I counseled them on how they were dealing with the situation and slowly helped them make constructive choices that focused them on moving forward with their lives in a positive way.

In these cases, choices could have been made either way that would

either destroy lives further, or build them back up. Some people make poor choices out of arrogance, or resistance to the life changes taking place - when this happens there are no good outcomes! So we have to be flexible to doing things and being open to new opportunities whatever they are.

There are those of us who criticize everything without really understanding the situation first. Someone with a "blue" collar job would be very reluctant to fix toilets, as he would consider such work "below him"... yet Jesus washed his followers' feet! This is what I am talking about - choose to be humble and open to whatever life brings you. Attitude and persistence are keys to success.

When I started transporting and marketing the ranch milk on a motor bike in 2013, the rains became heavier that year than ever before. The road from Kakooge to the ranch became very sticky, muddy and slippery with pot holes all over. With ten jerry cans loaded on board, riding became impossible - my only option became to drive with my feet out so I could support myself from falling over all the time! I got so tired but I never complained about this dirty job because I chose to see the benefit in doing it - even while other people seemed to be lifting up their standards, I kept on with the work. In the end this approach paid off for us at the Ranch as 2013 became one of our best years ever for milk sales.

So please take heart in every hardship, there is always a reward - choose to do it with a good attitude and with time you will be better off. I will leave you with the encouraging words of Jesus: *"In this world you will have trouble but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33).



The Future Begins

On The Inside



COSA - CLA Alumni Uganda

Lydia Nalujja

"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." (Romans 8:6) The reality in life is that no one can perform differently than the way they think.

Having worked with many different people from many different backgrounds, I believe that each person makes their own choices in life according to the thoughts they dwell on. And since we have free will to think what we want, people do all kinds of things and act in all sorts of ways. But the choice is ours... we are either proactive or reactive. We decide!

No one in life just gets everything they want. At one point or another we all come across a negative experience and the choice is ours to become *bitter* because of it, or *better* because of it.

When I was working at Wells of Hope Ministries, I dealt with vulnerable children whose parents were in prison, on death row or on prolonged sentences. It didn't matter if they were guilty or innocent, their absence always affected their family members mostly in a negative way, for with no parental love and guidance, children go astray.

And yet, in spite of these circumstances, I saw many children who decided to respond proactively, and made the best of their life circumstances. In fact, I learned that children who have some of the worst things happen to them can become better at coping with life than people whose lives are easy! *Why?* Because some of these children have realized that problems are not obstacles, and

instead, we just have to choose a better way of responding to problems.

In my experience I have had an example.

Marvin (not his real name) whose father had been arrested in 1998 while his mother had just conceived him is now 15 years of age in Primary Six. He had a lot of trauma according to his past, and told me once, "I have 3 siblings of which I am the last born, and our mother neglected us so our grandmother took care of us growing up. But because she was old and unable to provide for us, my two sisters were married off to old men and this really broke my heart. I was determined to live my life better and be more responsible for my future family so I chose to start up brick laying (masonry) to become like the hard-working people I saw in my village. Brick laying was incredible hard work for me at my age but I needed to stay in school and pay my own fees in order to achieve my goals."

As a human, tears rolled down in my face listening to his story. As a counselor and social worker I was able to see that "Marvin" had not placed blame either on himself or others but pro-actively found solutions to get him out of his situation and on to his bigger goals. His positive attitude gave him a chance to join the school that would take care of everything he struggled for. Most importantly he was eventually reunited with his father after leaving prison (who he had not seen for the 15 years). The two met and got to know each other, and the father loved the boy for struggles his son had endured to keep moving forward and striving for success in life.

A few things we don't have choices on are the families we are born in, or our gender, tribe, or skin color, but a positive mind and constructive thinking changes our seemingly negative circumstance from the impossible to the possible. In the end, we can ultimately choose to partner with God and become life transformers who create peace, joy and love within ourselves and make a world a better place for all.

As I have lived my life, I have discovered that ANYTHING and EVERYTHING in this world begins and happens as a result of the power of thoughts. Therefore the way we think combined with our emotions create a will for one to either act positively or negatively according to the choice made by each individual. This in turn shapes or molds our lives physically, financially, emotionally, relationally and spiritually depending on the focus and commitment we apply to it.

Good Leaders

Make Wise Choices



CLA Uganda Alumni & Youth Corps

Juliette Tabucia

As leaders, the responsibility and the privilege of serving others has been given to us - either through a vote, by appointment, or by accident. But how we got into leadership is less important than how we perform - that is the real test of a leader's worth over time.

I have realized that the challenging part of leadership is making crucial choices and decisions, which are sometimes hard...and sometimes easy. All leaders must develop the ability to think carefully and exhibit greater responsibility for every decision. In this way they will create the right kind of transformation for those they lead.

As a leader both in the home and for my class, there are a number of choices I have made that have had a big impact on others. And through these choices I have learned that it is our level of thinking that determines our decision-making.

Sometimes it is all the small choices we make that have the most significant effects on us - more than the big ones. But because they are small, we often do not mind about them so much.

Until one day we realize that they have actually had a big effect on us - maybe when

it is too late to reverse that effect.

And, it is the thoughts that we entertain in our minds - that are behind all these small decisions. Proverbs 23:7 says: "As a man thinks so does he become." That is why I have tried to hold onto positive thoughts. I believe they have helped to shape me into a responsible leader: A leader who does not wait to be told what to do but rather makes the best use of what she has been entrusted with. A leader with a greater sense of maturity, a greater respect for myself as well as those I am leading. A leader who bears in mind the opinions of those they are leading. A leader that has developed a heart of service towards the people they are leading.

Jesus always thought carefully about what he needed to say or do. In the end He chose to live and give His life for those he came for. And, he taught us to always ask the Holy Spirit to guide us in our thoughts and choices.

When my thoughts are not positive or guided by the Holy Spirit - I have seen negative effects: Sometimes, I break down emotionally. Sometimes, I make tough decisions that hurt people including myself.

So, over time I have realized day-by-day that the greatest choice is to choose to follow the ways of Jesus and asking his Spirit to guide, especially in understanding and being understood by those I am leading. I have realized that our thoughts and feelings are our responsibilities. So if we have made wrong choices, we can think different next time and make better choices.

Boys playing football (soccer) outside the boys home in Gulu



60,000 THOUGHTS

Continued from page 28 (back cover)

Maybe you are thinking over some person who hurt you or some difficulty you are facing. These thoughts can go on and on for sometime without you even realizing you are dwelling on them. And, this is where we have to learn to be more vigilant.

It's all about arresting your negative thought patterns when you realize they have taken hold of you and are taking you for a ride - a ride on the bus of negative thoughts. At first it may be 10 minutes into the ride before you get off, then with greater awareness you are able to arrest the process after 5 minutes, then it's 2 minutes. And then, one day the bus will pull up and you simply let it pass by.

But it is this bringing the light of awareness to anything that is hidden in our lives that is 50% of the battle. Just by developing the discipline of observing what is happening with your thoughts...you begin to weaken the undisciplined thought streams that often run our lives.

2. Fully realize the effects that this whole process is producing.

Jesus taught that what affects our lives is what we allow to come out of our hearts in the form of harmful thoughts and the like. (Matthew 15:11 & Mark 7:15)

What this means is that our thoughts and feelings set up a spiritual atmosphere around us in our lives. Many (but certainly not all) forms of depression are thought related. There is an entire field of Psychology that recognizes this and has a term to describe it - called Cognitive Therapy - it holds that our moods and emotional states are preceded by thought patterns.

The most damaging thoughts are the dark, discouraging kind of thoughts. If you ever see you are descending into that area - arrest the situation immediately and work on shifting your thinking, which is the next step.

A lot of the pain or suffering that we experience is really a result of our thoughts. Someone else could be going through the exact situation we are dealing with and yet respond to it in a totally different way. This shows us that we can choose our thoughts and attitudes.

3. Learn how to choose your thoughts.

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things." - writes Paul in Philippians 4:8

One of the most noble thoughts that keeps me focused on the big picture has been this: *"I came from God, I belong to God, and I am going back to God."* (John 13:3) It gives me my source, my identity and my destiny.

And also this one: *"I and the Father are one."* This connects me with the Oneness in which we live and move and

have our being. (*"He who unites himself to the Lord is one with Him in spirit."* 1.Cor.6:17)

Both of these examples - are what was in the mind of Christ. And, my mentors taught me to try and *"Think, talk, act and love like Jesus."*

The whole process of our sanctification is to have the mind of Christ. Philippians 2:5 says, *"Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus"*.

One of my mentors likes to teach this thought: *"I am holy for He is holy and He is in me."* (1 Peter 1:16, John 14:20, John 17:23)

But the point here is to find phrases that are meaningful to you - thoughts aligned with the greater truth of who you are, in God's perspective. Instead of allowing yourself to be the victim of conflicting messages and thoughts - about who you are and what is going on with your life.

4. Learn how to quiet the mind.

"Be still and know that I am God." Psalms 46:10

All of us struggle with the ability to still or quiet our minds. It seems to have a will of it's own. Quietening the mind has always been one of the main purposes of meditation. Today, many followers of Jesus are cautious about venturing in an area often seen to be the domain of Eastern religions. It was not always like this, if you examine Church history.

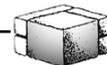
For a guide on how to do this in a manner that follows the way of Jesus you could look into the writings of Richard Foster. His recent book, *"Sanctuary of the Soul: Journey into Meditative Prayer"* was chosen 'Top Book of the Year' by Leadership Journal.

He writes, *"At the very heart of God is the passionate disposition to be in loving fellowship with you. From our side of this equation - it is meditative prayer that ushers us into this divine-human fellowship."*

The book describes the riches of learning to quiet your mind: Being able to discern more clearly the voice of God, developing a better 'big-picture' perspective, having a more peaceful emotional life and a more relaxed body.

Meditative prayer is both one of the most simple practices to do and yet one of the hardest things to learn. But it is essential if you are seriously going to work on taking control of your mind - which left to itself, only becomes a reflection of the noisy, often chaotic world we live in.

Summary: Developing good new habits is one of our most difficult challenges...and this is one of the hardest. But, if you can change your thoughts you can change your life. For our thoughts greatly influence our destiny. Our mind can hold one thought at a time...positive or negative. We have the holy responsibility and the human ability to manage that process.



60,000 THOUGHTS

Reflections from *Tim*

Suppose someone gave you \$60,000 dollars today. But, with one condition - that you had to choose various companies on the stock-market and invest it all before the end of the day, by buying shares in those companies.

Well, if you picked the right investments, yielding an average return of 10% per year, after 28 years those investments would be worth around \$1 million dollars.

Now consider this, modern research has found that a human being thinks up to 60,000 thoughts per day. That is about one thought per second - after subtracting the time we are asleep.

And amazingly, the wisdom literature of the world, across centuries and creeds - consistently tells us that it is in the way we invest our thoughts - that determines our destiny. *"As a man thinks... so he is,"* wrote the Hebrew King David 3000 years ago in the book of Proverbs 23:7 9 (KJV).

Do you really believe this? What would change if you did?

Here are some other famous quotes on this concept:

"A man's life is what his thoughts make of it." - Marcus Aurelius (Roman Emperor)

"A man is what he thinks about all day long." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

"The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitudes of mind." -William James

"The vision that you glorify in your mind, the ideal that you enthrone in your heart - this you will build your life by, this you will become." - James Allen:

So, what if you picked the right 60,000 thoughts every day - what kind of person would you be like, in 28 years? What would happen if you could 'take captive every thought' as the scriptures put it, and carefully invested your thoughts in ways that produced a greater future return?



It's hard to imagine 60,000 thoughts pass through our minds every day. But the big question is who is really in charge of that process? Do we control our mind or does our mind control us? Are we paying attention to what is happening? Are, we investing in those thoughts that will produce the results we want?

The truth is, most of the time our mind runs on 'automatic'.... generating a very chaotic, mish-mash stream of fragmented thoughts. And, we replay many of the same ones over and over when we are angry or worried about something.



My African friends sometimes use this expression when they are disturbed about something, they say: *"I'm having many thoughts."* And it does seem, that when we are in a more calm and peaceful state... the number of thoughts probably goes down. And then, when we are really stressed and upset - it shoots much higher.

As particular trends of thought continue they form strong patterns which begin to manifest as the moods, conditions and experiences in our lives. All of this creates the whole atmosphere in which we live our lives. So, we literally create the kind of world we live in - through our dominant thoughts and beliefs: They become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

So, what can we do about this whole situation? Here are four steps:

1. Start to bring more attention and awareness to what exactly is going on with your thought process.

If you observe yourself - there are times when you are busy doing little jobs, driving your car, and you seem to be focused on what you are doing. But, in reality, part of you is wandering off somewhere else, often to something that is troubling you.