



The Conditions We Give Our Mind

by Nivritee Khandelwal

You have your own mind, and to some extent, you can control what you constantly tell it. Let's take my own example. If I keep saying, "No, I'm not good at studies. I will not get the timing I want in my race. I will never be able to go on a stage in front of a hundred people and speak in English," I am already making a condition in my mind before I have even tried.

For me, when I speak in English in front of people, I fumble. But I think that is normal. It is nervousness. When I speak alone, I'm sometimes like, "Wow, this is beautiful. I'm fluent in it." My vocabulary might not be the best, but that does not mean that I cannot speak the language. If I am doing something and messing it up, and I immediately say that I will never be able to do it, I am telling my mind that I am not capable of doing that particular thing.

When you constantly repeat something to yourself, you start noticing things that prove what you are already thinking. If I constantly tell myself, "I won't be able to do it. I won't be able to do it," I will keep noticing every mistake and every failure and think, "See, I knew I couldn't do it." But what if I change the condition? What if I say, "It's okay if I'm not able to do it right now. I tried it. I'm trying again. I will be able to do it"? Instead of only seeing the failure, I start concentrating on the trying. I can look at myself and say, "Oh wow, I am on the path. I am on the right path towards making it happen."

I have had a fear of studying. If I constantly tell myself, "I have a fear of studying. I have a fear of studying. I will never be able to study," then I am constantly reminding myself of that fear. Even now, sometimes I tell myself, "What if the fear comes back and I am not able to study?" But abhi tak toh nahi aaya na fear. It is not standing here with me right now. Till the time it hasn't come, why am I constantly telling myself that it will come? Till the time it is not there, I can do my work properly. And even if that fear does come back, I can deal with it when it actually comes, instead of experiencing it before it has even happened.

The same thing happens with the way we look at ourselves. If I constantly tell myself, "I'm not a good looking girl," I will probably start noticing every single thing about myself that I do not like. I have acne, and there have been people who have commented on it. But one thing I am genuinely happy about is that throughout my journey with acne, I never really felt that I needed to hide it. When I came to social media, I saw how insecure people can become about acne. I realised that I never wanted my acne to become something that decided how I saw myself. Whether it is my hair, my acne, the way my face looks, the way I walk or anything else, I do not want those things to become conditions I put on myself. Yes, I get scared. Yes, I am underconfident sometimes. My hands tremble when I notice that people are staring at me. But if I keep telling myself, "Nahi hoga, nahi hoga, nahi hoga," I have already decided what will happen. Instead, sometimes I need to tell myself, "Come on, they are just staring at me. I will do it. Let them also learn something from me."

Sometimes we notice things about ourselves that nobody else has even noticed. Let's say I have tied my hair and I can see my baby hair coming out. I will immediately go, take some water and tap it on my hair, because I think everybody can see it. Then I ask somebody else and they say, "Oh, I didn't even notice it." It was me who was looking at it. It was me who had given that tiny thing so much importance.



And I think that is what I am trying to convey. So much depends on the way we look at something. Take something as simple as a mango. I personally love mangoes. I think they are sweet, and I love eating them. My father does not like mangoes. He finds them too gila gila types and simply doesn't enjoy them. The mango is the same. What changes is the person looking at it.

Nobody thinks exactly the same way. Nobody sees everything exactly the way you do. Something that feels huge in your mind might not even be noticed by the person standing beside you. Something you have already decided you cannot do might actually be something you simply haven't learnt how to do yet.

So maybe we should be a little more careful about the conditions we give our minds. Instead of saying, "I can't do this," maybe I can say, "I can't do this yet." Instead of deciding that everybody is judging me, maybe I can remind myself that I do not actually know what they are thinking. Instead of deciding that my fear will definitely come back tomorrow, maybe I can live today while that fear is not here.

Your thoughts cannot control everything that happens to you. But they can change the way you walk into what happens to you. And sometimes, changing that one condition in your mind can change what you allow yourself to try.

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