

In a world of over-thinkers this book breaks the mold. Through practical, easy-to-use tips, you can learn to skillfully hear and use the wisdom from your feelings. Shelley captures what successful people know – listen to your own little voice. It will truly allow you to “live more.”

—NIDO QUBEIN, President, High Point University

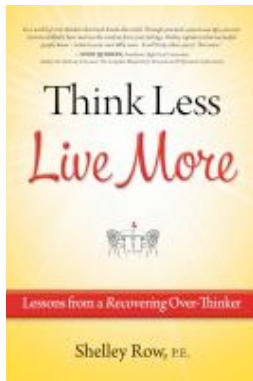
Author of *Strategy to Success: The Complete Blueprint for Personal and Professional Achievement*

Think Less Live More



Lessons from a Recovering Over-Thinker

Shelley Row, P.E.



For a world of chronic over-thinkers, this book holds the key. In eight easy steps, discover the essential role feelings play in creating a more fulfilling life and rewarding career. With wit, stories and a bit of science, the book shares tips from an executive, engineer, and recovering over-thinker on how to live with meaning by thinking less. Built-in exercises allow you to put the tips to work immediately. Don't over-think it - start reading now!

Think Less, Live More

Lessons From a Recovering Over-Thinker

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Your free excerpt appears below. Enjoy!

Think Less
Live More

Praise for Think Less, Live More

Shelley's newest book has led me to more informed choices when I use both my head and heart to guide my actions. I find that I live with more honesty and authenticity after reading Think Less, Live More. Shelley's relaxed, easy-to-read style made me want to dig in and put these tips to use. I highly recommend this book for anyone who wants to live a more meaningful life.

—**LIZ FLETCHER BROWN**, President of the coaching, speaking and training company, Life Mastery International, LLC. Author of the award-winning book: *Full Wattage! A Practical Guide to Living an Engaging and Purposeful Life Worth Celebrating*



Thinking is about what we are going to do. Feeling is about what's happening now. Shelley offers lessons to all of us about how to cultivate our feelings in this moment to live more fulfilled lives.

—**LARRY YERMAK**, creator of E-ZPass, strategic advisor to Cubic Transportation Systems, former chair ITS America



Shelley Row has been a consistent voice in the transportation industry as it relates to the career and life success of women in a field mostly filled with men. As a life coach with phenomenal experience in the workforce, Row manages to inspire, empower, and directly impact the advancement of women and their career satisfaction. It is no surprise that Think Less, Live More adds even more depth and breadth to her collection of wisdom on the topic. Chock full of “a-ha” moments for the reader, this is the book that will transform your approach to your goals, both professional and personal.

—**MARCIA FERRANTO**, President and CEO, WTS International

*I've used the information in this book and I've worked with the author personally.
Now my career/business is moving toward success and fulfillment.*

—**VASTI AMARO**, President & CEO, Vasti Transport Inc. and
President WTS Tampa Bay Chapter, Chair of WTS Women Owned Business Forum
and Florida Public Transit Association, Board of Directors



*A wonderful book. The author has made a woo-woo topic easy to understand and
practical to apply. With just a touch of science, she helps us grow into the fullness
of life and reach for goals we may have left behind.*

—**ARNOLD SANOW**, Author of
Get Along with Anyone, Anytime, Anywhere

Think Less *Live More*

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Over-Thinker



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Honor Your Feelings



HER OFFICE WAS on the first floor—grey, small, with a standard federal government metal desk and an Equal Employment Opportunity poster thumbtacked to the wall. She was an employee assistance counselor. I was an up-and-coming engineer in my mid-30s with what I thought was a minor boyfriend problem. Logically, he was perfect for me. I *should* be happy but something seemed amiss. That’s why I made the appointment, but I had never talked to a therapist or counselor, ever.

I was skittish as I strode down the hall to her office, my heels clicking on the grey linoleum. “What will this be like?” I asked myself. “What will we talk about?” Then I rationalized, “Stop worrying. How hard can it be? She’s a *counselor*. I’ve handled tougher things than this.”

She looked up when I tentatively opened the door. I noticed her soft curly brown hair as she offered me a chair, the stackable metal kind. I sat and waited.

“Hello, Shelley. How may I help you? Why are you here?” she asked calmly.

“Well, that’s just it. I don’t know why I’m here. I can’t think of anything that’s wrong.” She smiled as though this was something she had heard before. Her next words changed my life.

“I’m not interested in what you *think*. I want to know how you *feel*.”

I was stumped. Maybe this meeting was going to be harder than I had expected.

“What I feel?” I finally managed, befuddled. “I need to think about that.” To her credit, she didn’t laugh out loud. Patiently she instructed, “Find words a child would use—happy, mad, sad, glad.”

Before I could *think* about it, I heard myself say, “Sad. I *feel* sad.”

There it was: A feeling, not a thought.

My real problem? When I saw the therapist I was an over-thinker—and a very good one. (Considering my engineering background, you might even say I was professionally trained as an over-thinker.) But through a process of self-evaluation, reflection and research, I came to see that feelings have a valuable and, yes, essential role to play as we make our way through life choices.



Imagine that decisions and choices are made on a continuum between thinking and feeling. Over-thinkers like me (and perhaps you, at least some of the time) are situated decidedly toward the thinking end. We put stock in “thinking it through.” We respond to cultural norms and cues that tip the scales to thinking. We buy into the reverence around thinking: we value big thinkers, deep

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thinkers, creative thinkers and out-of-the-box thinkers. We like the idea of think tanks.

Now put your thinking cap on and observe how few reinforcements there are for valuing and using feelings in leadership and life. As an engineer, I understand that there are many problems that must be tackled using a methodical, scientific approach. After all, I won't drive over a bridge that someone "felt" was structurally adequate. However, in professional settings we actively and explicitly denigrate feelings. A deep booming voice from the ghost of management-training-programs-past pronounces authoritatively, "There's no place for feelings at work." But how could that possibly be? We work alongside feeling, sensing humans whose behaviors and decisions are influenced by thought *and* feeling. To address only the thinking part of people seems, err, illogical. We need brain power we just don't need it for everything.

In a business environment, you cannot simply think your way to the top. Over time, I learned that I needed to understand and use both my head and heart to be a successful leader. After interviewing more than 70 leaders (including association executives; CEOs in the retail, finance, and hospitality industries; directors of state and city agencies; a state supreme court justice; a college dean; a former astronaut and more), I can say definitively that effective leaders know the essential role that feelings, intuition and gut feel play in guiding their organizations, particularly in complex situations where data alone is not enough.

At a personal level, I also learned that leading with my heart allowed me to make big life decisions more effectively, which means with more fulfillment and contentment. For example, it's the heart that makes a soul-to-soul connection with a friend or lover. (Do not

try to choose a mate based on logic. Trust me on this one. I tried. It doesn't work.)

Yet we often try to apply an organized, methodical approach to situations that do not lend themselves to logic and rational thought, like career choices, family decisions, seeking life partnerships or finding the courage to live our dreams. But here is the tricky bit: For those of us who live and breathe logic, it is tough to let go of the rational approach. Allowing your heart to choose your life's direction can seem illogical. (Don't trust me on this one. Try it yourself. It works.)

When I started making life choices from my heart, whether in my career or personal life, my comfort level with decisions immediately improved. There were and are still difficulties and challenges, but there is also calm conviction. My choices just *feel* right.

Where are you on the thinking-feeling continuum? No one is completely one-sided but you probably tip the scale one way or the other for most choices. The challenge is whether you can skillfully use both in appropriate situations.

Increasingly, there is growing appreciation for the complexity and interaction between the head and heart, thinking and feeling. The heart and the gut (feeling) are intelligence centers but with a different type of intelligence from the brain (thinking). Einstein agreed; he had a keen appreciation for the intuitive. He said, "The intuitive mind is a sacred gift; the rational mind a faithful servant. We have created a society that honors the servant and has forgotten the gift."

In 2005 Daniel Goleman's bestseller *Emotional Intelligence* broke ground by creating an appreciation for alternate types of intelligence. Since then, ever-increasing neuroscience research reveals

the sophisticated interaction between the brain and the body's neurological system. Book after book shares research findings from neuroscience breakthroughs. We learn the mechanics of how the brain works and get a glimpse of the interaction between the brain, body and mind. It's ironic that it is science that is slowly bringing a new dialogue and respect for the legitimacy of feelings.

It comes down to this. Lead with your heart; manage with your head.



Science Interlude

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Research in neuroscience is teaching us about the functioning of the brain. I will offer brief bits of that research in these science interludes. For the purposes of this book, highly generalized language will be used. Simplistically, “brain” and “head” refer to the functions of the prefrontal cortex, the home of executive function, logic, planning, instruction and language. “Heart” and “feelings” are associated with the limbic system and the felt sense they support through the nervous system. In reality, cognitive and emotional processing are heavily dependent on both “head” and “heart.”

Source: Hanson, Rick. *Buddha's Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love & Wisdom*. New Harbinger Publications, 2009. P. 146.

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Hear Both Voices

But you can't lead with your heart and manage with your head if you don't develop the habit of hearing *both* voices. Over-thinkers are so comfortable with the constant yammering and familiar churn of thought that it takes conscious, deliberate effort to allow the softer voice of feeling to emerge.

Here's a trick that works for me when my loud, demanding voice threatens to drive away the soft voice. In the movie, *Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me* there was a character, Mini Me, who was a small sized clone of the character Dr. Evil. When I want to access my capacities for both thinking and feeling, it helps to visualize my own Mini Mes, perched on each shoulder. One is Thinking Me and the other is Feeling Me. Thinking Me is loud and persistent—constantly analyzing, rationalizing, organizing and theorizing. Feeling Me is quiet and patient. Often I must coax Feeling Me to be more vocal because Thinking Me is on the other shoulder jumping up and down clamoring to be heard.

Even accomplished over-thinkers can learn to hear their own Feeling Mes. As the therapist I mentioned early in this chapter did, ask a question, “What am I feeling?” and wait for a response. Feeling You always speaks up when given the chance. Sometimes the message feels like a little tug inside, or it can be the nudge of your intuition or the butterflies in your stomach when you “just know” that something isn't right. One leader I interviewed described it as having Jiminy Cricket on his shoulder. Spiderman fans might understand my friend who notices situations that make his “spidey-senses” tingle.

You may be accustomed to brushing these feelings aside and attending to what Thinking You is going on and on about. But ignoring that soft sense is ignoring your internal guidance system. It will not steer you wrong, if you listen attentively and honestly.

Here are two practices to get you started.

Shush Thinking You and Attend to Feeling You

In a story from her book *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, Anne Lamott found this quote in a prayer book, “The Gulf Stream will flow through a straw provided the straw is aligned to the Gulf Stream, and not at cross purposes with it.” That’s what you want to do. Explore ways to align yourself so that the Gulf Stream of your feelings can communicate with you. Find the best ways to hear the soft, inner voice. You’ve got it. You just have to hear it.



Science Interlude

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In your brain the corpus calosum connects the right and left hemispheres. The corpus calosum creatively assembles information from all parts of the brain to create that aha moment. It works even when you are not actively thinking about the problem. There is some evidence to suggest that it works best in quiet, down time.

Source: Hanson, Rick. *Buddha’s Brain: The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love & Wisdom*. New Harbinger Publications, 2009. P. 54.

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To connect with your feelings and quiet the demanding voice in your head that wants you to “do-do-do” instead of “be,” you have many options. Try different techniques and practices to find ones that fit well into your life at that moment. Experiment until you find what works for you.

MEDITATION. Meditation is one of my favorite ways to connect with Feeling Me. (I had to first convince Thinking Me that we didn’t have to be “good” at it.) Take a class or read a book about meditating, or just try sitting quietly. Don’t be discouraged if your mind wanders; that happens to all of us. Just bring yourself gently

back to that quiet place. You may find that practicing meditation for just a few minutes a day can clear your mind and allows you to access Feeling You.

SPEND TIME IN NATURE. The natural world—woods, gardens, water, even your backyard—is calming and inspiring for many of us. As you sit or stroll, think about how the interconnectedness, beauty, and wisdom of nature can connect you with your own inner wisdom.

EXERCISE. Run, walk, swim, bike. Being outside in the fresh air (or even on a treadmill at the gym) and moving your body helps free you from daily pressures and gives your brain a rest. That freedom may allow some much-needed perspective to come into an otherwise hectic day.

CREATE ART. It doesn't matter if you are "artistic." Whatever your skill level, making art places you fully present in the moment of creation, clears the mind and allows new clarity to emerge. Get out paper, crayons, paint, scissors, clay, and go for it! Take a class in art journaling, pottery or collage. What you uncover may surprise you.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS WITH YOGA, CHI GONG, OR TAI CHI. Mindful movement and a focus on breath help flush away daily pressures and provide a quiet space inside you. That space opens you to calm reflection and receptive listening.

SCHEDULE QUIET TIME. Read an inspirational book or magazine, go fishing, soak in a tub, take a country drive, or do whatever provides peace and quiet for you.

When you are trying one of these approaches, try to let your mind relax. Consciously decide not to grapple with problems and

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issues or to make another mental to-do list (I know you do that!). Remember, your brain is working on problems even if you are not, so give it a break. Pay attention to how your body feels, noticing any tension in your muscles. Breathe deeply, exhale and allow stress to slide out with the breath. (It may not *all* go away, but some will). Relish the moment, that specific moment. It will never come again.

It's Your Turn: Find Quiet Time

How can you incorporate down time into your day? I know that may seem impossible. Your typical day is already packed; you can't squeeze another thing in.

But don't give up too quickly. Look in the "cracks and crevasses" of your day or week. Do you have a few minutes alone in the car to turn off the music or news? Can you take a short walk outside alone in the morning or after dinner? Find a corner in your house that you can claim for your own. Give yourself a time-out. Perhaps you can use a morning shower or bath as quiet space.

Come up with your own ideas. Or, better yet, choose several and commit to trying them for a few minutes each day, consistently for *four weeks*, until you find a combination of quiet activities that suit you and your schedule. The benefits are worth four weeks of experimenting. After all, new habits solidify only with practice.

Possible ways I can include quiet time in my day or week include:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Now that you have your list, how and when will you try each option? Write your commitment here.

I commit to include _____ minutes of quiet time each day starting on _____.

Notice and Name

Building quiet time into your routine is essential, and there is another, complementary approach for learning to recognize feelings that is very useful when practiced regularly. I call it *noticing and naming*.

Throughout the day, stop and notice your feelings at that moment. Pause momentarily and ask yourself, “What am I feeling?” Be attentive and also note if the feeling is centered in a particular part of your body, revealing itself as tenseness in your gut, heart, jaw or eyes. Don’t try to change it; just take note.

Then, mentally scroll through several words until you hit on one that clicks. This is the feeling’s name or label. This name validates the feeling and helps you address it and see patterns in what feelings come up for you.

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Don't push the feeling or name away with thoughts of "I shouldn't feel this way." Feelings aren't right or wrong; they just are. Here's how it works.

Start in the morning as you prepare for the day. As you shuffle from bed to bath, fix coffee or prepare breakfast, notice and name how you feel: relaxed, optimistic, anxious, open, apprehensive. As you drop the kids at school, notice and name how you feel: proud, loving, worried, relieved. As you settle into your workday, notice and name how you feel: engaged, lackluster, motivated, energized. As you walk into a stressful meeting, notice and name how you feel: tense, afraid, confident. Find the word that fits your feeling in that moment, and have no judgment about the word. It simply reflects a feeling—not good or bad, right or wrong. It is a valid, legitimate feeling that brings extra awareness to you.

You may find that naming the feeling gives you an opportunity to deepen your understanding of it. For example, when you ask Feeling You what you are feeling at a particular moment, the answer might be "afraid." You might want to probe a bit: Ask yourself, "What am I afraid of?" and listen to what Feeling You has to say. (Try to ignore Thinking You who will have an opinion. Thinking You *always* has an opinion.)

Be open and honest. To accept feelings validates them and your true self. Naming may give you a sense of release that allows you to move beyond negative thoughts into more constructive approaches to solving a problem.

Notice and name will become a habit but initially, you may need a reminder. Find or make something that will prompt you, such as a card with "notice and name" written on it, or a special screen saver on your phone or computer. You could wear your watch on the

other arm so every time you look at it, you will think about naming your emotion. Whatever you choose, have your reminder item handy around your house, on your desk, in the car or wherever you tend to be in a typical day. Reminders and repetition make noticing and naming a habit.

It's Your Turn: Noticing and Naming

Pick a reminder for when to notice your feelings, then notice and name them at least four times a day for a week. This only takes a moment. In each of these moments, note how your body reacts as you name the emotion. You will use this skill again in Chapter 4.

Times you might choose to notice and name include:

- ◇ Before a big meeting
- ◇ When engaging in an emotionally charged discussion
- ◇ When leaving for work
- ◇ When returning home
- ◇ While dropping your kids off
- ◇ While picking the kids up
- ◇ During activities you enjoy
- ◇ During activities you dread

Give each feeling a name. Search through possible words until you find one that fits. You will *feel* when it's right. Here are a few to get you started.

Afraid	Relieved	Patient
Confident	Uncomfortable	Firm
Curious	Happy	Scary
Concerned	Relaxed	Satisfied
Worried	Calm	Stuck

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Heavy	Suspicious	Embarrassed
Sad	Unsettled	Wary
Pleased	Annoyed	Careful
Tight	Intrigued	

Thinking You or Feeling You: Which Do You Use?

Congratulations! You are learning to listen to both Thinking You and Feeling You. Accessing information from the two Yous is key to leading with your heart and managing with your head.

Let's look at each one. Keep in mind that this is not an all or nothing approach. You constantly integrate both head and heart, but the balance of power between them matters.

Managing with Your Head

The processes of our thinking brain connect to lists, goals and the ways we function and achieve many of our day-to-day tasks. For most of us, it comes naturally to manage our lives with our heads because that is in line with our cultural norms. Some typical examples include:

- ◇ Charting the actions to reach your goals
- ◇ Managing your day: Prioritizing tasks, scheduling appointments and errands
- ◇ Managing risk
- ◇ Monitoring progress
- ◇ Preparing to-do lists
- ◇ Monitoring and managing personal finances and investments

Thinking me, my organized methodological brain, loves this stuff! (Woo-hoo! a to-do list! Admittedly, it's a little crazy to get this much pleasure from checking off a to-do item. And yes, if I do something that is not on the list, I add it and check it off. Don't laugh. I know I'm not the only one.)

Leading with Your Heart

The heart, feelings, and intuition have direct connections to contentment and fulfillment. Your heart knowledge is best for big life decisions that can't be plugged into a calculator. For these choices, all the logic in the world won't overcome an uncomfortable feeling. Some examples include:

- ◇ Choosing your mate
- ◇ Choosing friends
- ◇ Setting life goals
- ◇ Choosing to have a family
- ◇ Making decisions about your family
- ◇ Choosing a career
- ◇ Choosing between job opportunities or career paths
- ◇ Choosing your home
- ◇ Relating to people
- ◇ Making complex (ambiguous, uncertain, high risk)
- ◇ business decisions

In my over-thinking days I admit to analyzing job opportunities with pro and con lists, endlessly *thinking* about the options and trying to *understand* the choices. “But that process is important,” you’re saying to yourself. True—the analysis is great *input* into the decision, but the choice comes from the heart. The heart alone can

do the internal calculus (and I know calculus) that combines facts with the wisdom of deep-seated desire.

I also tried to use rational thinking to consider the men I was in relationships with. (You should note the use of the plural. I had the opportunity to try this on numerous occasions.) The man I dated during college was textbook perfect for me—according to Thinking Me. He was everything that I should want. My brain said, “But he’s so nice! He’s good to you, he wants to take care of you, he’s a great partner, he loves you and he’s handsome.” Yep. All of that was true. My mind kept telling me so, as did everyone else. My parents loved him, his loved me. But there was a nagging voice inside and growing discomfort with the relationship. The “feeling” signs were there—my confusion, crying, delayed mailing of the wedding invitations.

Looking back, the power of my mind to overpower my feelings astounds me. I walked down the aisle on my dad’s arm telling myself, “I can make this work.” But no amount of rationalizing made it so. My heart was not engaged and the swarm of butterflies in my stomach tried their best to send a message to me. The marriage ended quickly and painfully. It took another similar relationship experience before I recognized that this approach didn’t work.

I chose to let my heart handle the next relationship decision, and it latched on to the person who is now my husband. It’s not always smooth sailing for us, but the difference is that my heart is in it for the long haul. This *feels* like where I belong.

Out of Balance: Early Warning Signs

Ideally, your head and your heart exist in partnership. Don’t let Thinking You become a dictator. Each sometimes takes the lead, depending on the type of choice you’re making. As you give yourself

more quiet time and practice noticing and naming, you will build emotion-awareness that helps you give weight to the You (Thinking or Feeling) that is most appropriate to your situation.

Over thinkers may fall into the trap of relying too much on Thinking You. Here are some ways to become attuned to the early warning signs that indicate you're not listening to your heart.

RATIONALIZING DECISIONS. You face a decision where one direction appears to be the logical choice and yet you hesitate, seemingly for no reason. The logical path is from the head, but the hesitation is a voice from the heart.

One common example might involve facing a crossroads in your life. My sister had this dilemma: Do I stay in my safe, government job in the GIS department or do I quit to pursue my pilot's license and flying career late in life? (She chose flying.) My conundrum was, do I remain at the U.S. Department of Transportation in my executive position with a nice paycheck deposited automatically every two weeks, with great retirement and health insurance, or do I quit to start my own business as a professional speaker. (I chose the new career.)

My sister and I were trying to think through our decisions, but both of us needed input from our hearts. If you find yourself second-guessing what seems to be a rational choice, notice and name that hesitation. There is a message from Feeling You that wants to be heard, and it pays to listen.

USING PRO AND CON LISTS. A pro and con list—in which you list the factors that are causing you to lean towards, or away from, a certain course of action—is a columnar form of rationalizing. You are trying to use logic to find your way, and these lists can be very

Honor Your Feelings

useful tools to organize your thoughts and help you better understand an issue.

But pro and con lists are incomplete, because big, life-changing decisions are influenced by both tangible and intangible factors. To Thinking You, your great health insurance or your pension or your short commute are tangible factors that look really good on a list, and might seem like great reasons to, for example, stay at a job you dislike.

But Feeling You may be interested in more intangible factors: your stress level, your passion for the job, how you relate to your co-workers. Write in the intangible factors and feelings in big, bold letters even though they are harder to quantify. As you learn to value and trust your feelings you'll see that a single strong emotion can trump a long rational list.

Here's an example: Below is the pro/con list Thinking Me created as I debated leaving my good job (make that great job) at the U.S. Department of Transportation. There was every logical reason to stay in that job except that my heart wasn't in it. My feelings were trying to tell me that it was time to pursue a long-held vision to be a speaker on topics that would matter in others' lives.

I made the decision to leave using my heart and I used my head to sort out the practical implications. We had savings so that we wouldn't starve, at least not immediately. I could sign on to my husband's health insurance. I spoke frequently in my government job, which make me confident that I could master public speaking.

Still, leaving my secure job was a huge risk. Am I sorry I made the decision I did? Not for one moment.

Think Less, *Live More*

Pros — Leaving U.S. Department of Transportation for a speaking career	Cons — Leaving U.S. Department of Transportation for a speaking career
Exciting, new challenges	Stable, well-paying job
I love speaking	Good retirement eight years in the future
I believe in the message (Think Less. Live More.)	Health care
Work at home	Internationally known and respected
It's fun	Mostly Monday-Friday
I'm good at it and believe that I will be successful	New career is very scary for women of a certain age
I may be able to inspire others	High risk of failure
	Demanding hours
	Steep learning curve
	Little relevant background
	Husband is retired with minimal income

SEEKING APPROVAL FROM OTHERS. Family, friends and others whom you respect can offer useful perspectives on a big decision. Take care, however, that you are looking for just their input and useful feedback—*not* their approval.

FORCING A SOLUTION. Beware the words, “I can *make* it work.” This is Thinking You convincing Feeling You that logical thought

Honor Your Feelings

and willpower will overcome deep-seated misgivings. Don't let Thinking You convince you; it's much more productive to ask Feeling You to help you delve into those pesky, nagging feelings that something isn't right.

The more you practice noticing and naming, the more quickly you will pick up these early warning signs and learn to redirect yourself back to a healthy balance between Feeling You and Thinking You. Remember, you need both and you can learn to skillfully use each to your best advantage.

Honor Your Feelings

...the Highlights

Fulfillment comes from leading with your heart and managing with your head. Even an accomplished over-thinker can develop the skills to quiet Thinking You and hear Feeling You.

Hear Both Voices

- ✓ You can't lead with your heart and manage with your brain if you don't hear both voices.
- ✓ **Shush Thinking You and Attend to Feeling You.** Quiet your thoughts and connect to your feelings. Incorporate short periods of quiet time into your day and week. Review your ideas for finding pockets of quiet time and give them a try.
- ✓ **Notice and Name.** Use your reminder to notice your feelings periodically throughout your day. Notice them nonjudgmentally and find a name that fits.

Thinking You or Feeling You: Which Do You Use?

- ✓ Manage with your head to organize the activities of life, but lead with your heart for big decisions that impact the direction of your life.

Recognize Early Warning Signs

- ✓ Observe the signs that you're not listening. Pay attention to rationalizing decisions or over-reliance on the opinions of others. Red flags should fly if you hear yourself saying, "I can make this work."

Words of Gratitude

I am grateful for the feelings from my heart that guide my way.



Set Goals with Heart



“YOU WANT TO do what? Move to France?!” Thinking Me railed incredulously to Feeling Me. “We can’t move to France for a year! That’s crazy talk. Think about it. We have a great job. We love this job! We’re at the top of our career. We’re successful! Mike loves his job. We have a mortgage, an elderly mother and what would the cat do without us for a year?”

Feeling Me listened unfazed. “Rationalize all you want. I know what I know, and I know that living in France for a year is important.”

“And why is this so important? Explain it to me.”

“I can’t explain it in the logical way that you understand. I just know it’s important. I sense it. It will change us and it is somehow part of a bigger, more fulfilling life for us.”

“I hate when you talk that way! How am I supposed to make sense of it?”

“You’re not supposed to ‘make sense of it.’ You only have to trust it ... trust me.”

“Yeah, right.”

And so it went for a couple of months, with me going back and forth listening alternately to Thinking Me and Feeling Me. It started when I was meditating in our sunroom in Annapolis early one morning. I saw myself sitting at a small, round iron table on a stone patio overlooking a green valley, with palm trees and a sliver of blue Mediterranean sea just beyond. I knew, as one knows these things, that I was living in France—not visiting, but living there for a year. To live in France was a hazy goal that I had stuffed away in the remote part of my brain years before.

Now, here it was again, not hazy but clear. And it didn't make a lick of sense (as we say in Texas) according to Thinking Me. To my credit, and because of years of practice listening to Feeling Me, she got a say in the decision this time.

My dad had died five years previously, but his words were what made the difference. He would say, "You never know until you try." He said it at the most annoying times. "I don't know how to sew a button back on." "I don't know how to make tea." "I don't know how to throw a dart." And then, the tasks became a little more complex. "I don't know how to trim the hedges." "I don't know how to mow the grass." "I don't know how to do the laundry." Each time he gave the same answer, "You never know until you try."

Here I sat, struggling with Thinking Me and the mental pro-and-con list she created, a long, logical list of reasons why we couldn't and shouldn't move to France. How would being gone for a year affect my career success, or Mike's? We definitely didn't have the money. My mother would hate the idea, and what would we do with our cat? But Feeling Me, who had gained some traction over the years of practice, quietly nudged using my dad's voice, "You never know until you try."

Set Goals With Heart

Hmmm. What if? What if it *was* possible? Would I be able to live with myself if I never even tried? When I was ready to lead with my heart and had a clear goal, I went to Mike.



What are your goals? Do you have any? Studies show that approximately 90% of people never set specific goals. Of the 10% who do, 70% do not achieve them. (On the positive side, the 10% who achieve their goals do so consistently and repeatedly.) Research also shows that making progress on our goals leads to more positive emotions and more satisfaction with life. Additionally, Dr. Timothy Pychyl reports that we experience the strongest positive emotional response when we make progress on our most difficult goals. Zig Ziglar nailed it when he said, “Most people are a wandering generality rather than a meaningful specific.” In my experience we don’t set goals because:

- ◇ We don’t want to think about them.
- ◇ We don’t think we will reach our goals (and many of us don’t).
- ◇ We fear disappointment.
- ◇ We fear giving up the comfort of where we are today.
- ◇ We don’t know what goals to set, so we set thinking rather than feeling goals...or none at all.

Over-thinkers approach goal setting as an intellectual exercise. We are so busy thinking it through, making the steps practical and achievable, that we often miss the bigger picture. We set practical goals and wonder why they lack spark and excitement. The problem is that we get the roles of Thinking You and Feeling You confused when we develop our goals.

Meaningful goals come from the heart. They may not always be practical but they *feel* right—and often, they are petrifying. Author

and lecturer Marianne Williamson says, “Your passion is your assignment.”

Action steps to *reach* our goals come from the head. That’s where Thinking You excels. Feeling You guides us to the goals that lead to fulfillment. With the goal defined, we harness the power in our *head* to make it happen. The process is straightforward: *Ask* for what you want from the heart and with pure intent; *Do* all you can; and *Release* attachment to and control of the outcome.

Asking is from the heart. Doing is from the head. Releasing is from the heart.

Set Your Goals

Put your goals out there: what you want, need or aspire to. Goals should feel good and seem familiar or somehow “right” for you. Some of these goals may be things you’ve always meant to do, like write a novel. Some may be dreams that seem unattainable, as my year in France once did.

Perhaps you’re thinking, “Shelley, that’s nice to say, but the types of goals you’re talking about—the things that I would love to do in my life—are impractical and impossible.” To which I respond, “Are you sure? How do you know?” Do you really have that much to lose if you just give it a try? Allow yourself to go wishing!

The following exercise may help. As you complete it, remember to be attentive to your feelings, and check in with your heart. Goals should *feel* good and seem familiar or somehow “right” for you.

It's Your Turn: Make Your List

Start by generating ideas that describe what you want to do, be, or have in your life. Have fun with it as you write down as many things as you can. Don't hold back! Let ideas pop into your mind without judgment. This is not an exercise for Thinking You. Thinking You will come up with all the reasons your ideas can't happen. Let Feeling You make the list.

As I mentioned earlier, the trick to shutting out Thinking You and engaging Feeling You is to write quickly. Come up with at least 50 items in ten minutes. Yes, ten minutes! Working quickly keeps you from judging your deepest desires.

You will list some things that feel scary, impractical and highly improbable. Don't react to the fear, just write. Don't edit; just accept your ideas as a reflection of you. After all, it's only a list.

Your list will be a mishmash of ideas, experiences, characteristics, aspirations. There are no rules for this exercise

Ready. Set. Go. You have ten minutes.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

Think Less, *Live More*

10. _____
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34. _____

Set Goals With Heart

35. _____
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50. _____

My own goal list, created many years ago, is a mash-up. (It is crumpled and torn, and I still keep it close at hand.) Included are big inspiring goals that have impacted the course of my life, like finding a loving spouse, helping kids get an education, running for office and getting my PhD (I'm still working on some of those). They are part of the vision I have for myself and what I can offer in the world. My sense of fulfillment is tied to these goals.

Then there's the "stuff"—all the things I would like to have or do in my lifetime, such as owning nice quality clothes, original art,

diamond earrings and a two-seater convertible Mercedes (I'm still working on some of these items too!). These things aren't so noble, but they are honest and, for whatever reason, represent something important to me. (For some reason I always wanted a diamond and sapphire ring. I don't know why. I just did.) It would be nice to have or do these things, but my sense of self is not entangled in them.

From the minute I made the list and put it on paper, things happened in the most unexpected ways. Here's my favorite example. Mike and I had a whirlwind romance. I knew very quickly that I wanted to spend my life with him. Once we decided to marry, we started the Great Ring Search. We went to jewelry stores throughout the Washington, D.C. area and looked at everything from solitaires to gold bands. Nothing *felt* quite right. During one of our shopping trips at our local jewelry store, my eye fell on a beautiful and simple diamond and sapphire ring. Then I remembered. A diamond and sapphire ring is on my list. When I wrote it down years ago, I never dreamed it would one day become my wedding ring!

My life list also included bringing my cherished friends together from across the country to meet each other. We did that for our wedding, when they all came to Annapolis and spent the weekend with us. All these years later I still see them in our living room, talking and laughing together, my friends, my husband and me. It makes me smile.

Glance back at your goal list, a combination of large and small, noble and trivial. Without making judgments of what's possible and what's not, affirm that items on your list come from a grounded place within you. Let Feeling You review the list for any item that is only there because it fulfills someone else's expectation or it is a *supposed to*.

Congratulations! You have your unique goal list. Let's go one step more and identify one goal that deeply inspires you.

Set an Inspired Goal

After I had my vision about living in France, I listened to Feeling Me. When I told Mike that I wanted us to go abroad for a year, he was immediately supportive (he's awesome). Here was a goal bigger than anything I had ever attempted. The goal was highly improbable, impractical, unlikely and *very* illogical. But it *felt* right and it inspired me. Could I do it? I didn't know. It would take time to achieve, but the most inspiring goals do.

What about you? I hope your horizons have expanded via your new goal list. My guess is that it feels good to let your aspirations free, even though they also feel a wee bit scary. Don't stop here. Somewhere inside, you already know that you want to make a contribution with your life. That contribution inspires you. It's that thing that calls to you, your "personal legend" as Paul Coelho refers to it in *The Alchemist*. What is it?

Your most inspired goals use your unique skills to make a difference in the world. They are not about how to get rich, although that may happen as a byproduct. If you're thinking that you don't have a clue, scan your goal list and pay attention to the things you love—the passions in your life, the special characteristics that are your strengths and your gifts. You are designed to make a contribution that no one else can. Don't be afraid to dream. Open yourself to the endless possibilities.

Here's the description I wrote for the goal of living in France for a year.

Think Less, Live More

I'm sitting outside at a small table on a stone patio overlooking the French Riviera. It's a beautiful, warm, sunny day. It's quiet. I'm by myself on the patio, thinking and absorbing the beauty and magic of the world. The Universe is giving me the words for the book (this book) and is leading me through the publishing process. I feel good, alive, healthy and happy.

Having a written statement about your inspiring goal is the next step to achieving it.

It's Your Turn: Set an Inspiring Goal

Answer the following question. Don't think about it. Let your heart answer.

What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? _____

Now, sit with that answer and all of the items on your goal list. Pick one goal that *feels* important. (You will develop that one further in these exercises. But, keep in mind, you can have more than one goal! The magic of goal-setting is that you are capable of far more than Thinking You can imagine.)

Set Goals With Heart

Jot down one of the goals that stands out. It's the one calling your name. It's okay if the goal is not crystal clear or well defined like "Live in France for a year" or "Start my own company." Maybe it's to live a fulfilling life. That's fine. Write it down and we'll work with it.

My Goal:

Envision yourself living that goal. What does life look like when you live the goal? Use Feeling You and imagine all the characteristics or attributes of that life.

Write a short paragraph that answer the following questions as you write.

When I am living my goal, I am.... _____

Where are you? (In an office, your home, the U.S., another country, I orbiting the earth, on a podium?) _____

Who is with you? (Co-workers, family, friends, musicians, body builders, aborigines?) _____

What are you doing? (Feeding baby elephants, teaching kids to grow a garden, writing a screenplay?) _____

How do you feel? (Relaxed, challenged, calm, invigorated, strong, successful, accomplished, satisfied?) _____

Keep this paragraph close at hand. Tab this page in the book, or make a copy to keep in your house or on your desk. The more you refer to it and remind yourself of what you have written, the better.

Rituals and Reminders

It's essential to set goals, and equally important to reinforce them over and over. Develop a system of rituals and reminders so that consciously and subconsciously you repeat and reinforce. Let's start with rituals.

Rituals come in many forms such as prayer, daily affirmations, and journaling. Create a ritual that works for you.

My inspiring goals are incorporated into daily affirmations that I repeat to myself every morning as I drive to work, and during my morning run. Find a ritual that works for you at a time of day that *fits into your established routine*. Whatever your method, repeat *daily*—yes, daily, or even multiple times a day. Repetition keeps your goals in the forefront of your mind, whether you realize it

Set Goals With Heart

consciously or not. It could be something like repeating “I am living my worthiness” when you first look in the mirror every morning.

It's Your Turn: Rituals

My daily ritual is to do or say: _____

I will do or say it:

- ◇ First thing in the morning
- ◇ Traveling to/from work or on errands
- ◇ During the day (be specific)
- ◇ In the evening
- ◇ Before I go to bed

It is easy to be distracted by the demands of life, and that may sideline your goals. It's helpful to create reminders of your goals that you will see as you go about your day.

Reminders instill focus. The goal-setting exercise you completed is a potent step because you have a *written* list, one more step toward achievement. “Writing” can be any type of visual image—a list of words, a paragraph description, a drawing, magazine clippings—anything that represents your goal. Having a visual image embeds your desire at a deep and intuitive level, and sends a message to yourself that you're serious. That creates momentum.

During the time when I was making my dream of living in France a reality, my morning commute to U.S. Department of Transportation was more than an hour. I devoted it to my affirmations and requests. Every morning in the car I repeated, “I am living in France for a year.” In addition to these daily affirmations I made a crayon drawing of the vision from my meditation all those years ago. The drawing and my life list lived inside my DayTimer so that I literally carried the image of my goal with me every day, and I still have it.

My Drawing



One day I was flipping through a magazine and stumbled across a photograph of a home in France with a view over a beautiful Provençal valley. It was similar to the view I saw during my meditation. I tore the photograph out and propped it up on my desk at home as another reminder.

It's Your Turn: Reminders

Take the short paragraph description of your goal and convert it to a visual image. You can draw it, write it in an attractive font to have on your desk or posted in your closet, make a photo collage from magazines, or find an item that represents that goal.

Take Action

With goals set, action steps are next. Over-thinkers are at our best when it's time to take action, because we get things done! Consistent, intentional action is essential to reach your goals. For example, no amount of *visualizing* will make you physically fit. You have to get moving. Now is the time to let Thinking You free. Your brain is the master of action steps and you are ready for thoughtful action.



Science Interlude

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Brain research shows that intentional, concerted mental focus embeds new habits into your brain. It must, however, be intentional and repeated, not accidental and random.

Source: Begley, Sharon. *Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain*. Ballantine Books, 2007.

.....

Here are three ideas to consider as you think about action steps. First, identify critical success factors. Critical success factors are the items that *must* be completed in order to achieve your goal. There are usually only a few of them and without them you won't succeed.

For example, when we set the goal to live in France for a year, there were three critical success factors. One was to have a place to

live in France. Two was to have the money to live there. And three, there needed to be a stable situation for our family back home.

There were many other action items, but without these, we would not choose to board the plane. You may notice that the first two are tangible items that are solvable. The third is one for which we had no control. We trusted that the stars would align at the right time, and they did.

Second, identify small action steps for each critical success factor. A critical success factor for us was to have the money to live abroad for a year. To accomplish this goal we had three action steps. We created a budget, set up a specific savings account (named the “France” account) and established an automatic fund transfer into that account every month. Small action steps start a pattern of “small wins.” Research (described by Charles Duhigg in *The Power of Habit*) shows that small wins set a habit that convince us that bigger achievements are possible.

.....
The somewhat ugly truth about success is that it consists of lots of small, often tedious steps. Expect excitement all the way to your goal and you'll surely be disappointed. The bigger the goal, the more boring steps you'll have to take. Simple.

Source: Siimon Reynolds, *Why People Fail: The 16 Obstacles to Success and How You Can Overcome Them*

.....

Several goal-achievement programs advocate using the SMART acronym. SMART (as defined by professor and author George T. Doran in 1981) stands for goals that are specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related. Personally, I do not support the SMART approach for establishing your inspiring goals, because the goals become too small and too much from the head.

Set Goals With Heart

But SMART is a great tool to help think about action steps. As you look at your goals, what specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related action steps can you identify? Make them small enough to be manageable. You build confidence and momentum as you achieve each small step.

Once we established the goal to live in France, Thinking Me created a long list of SMART mini-goals:

- ◇ Research Visa requirements.
- ◇ Research health insurance options.
- ◇ Buy or rent a car.
- ◇ Research banking options.
- ◇ Research cell phones and internet service options.

Each was measurable, specific, realistic and I, of course, had a time table!

With SMART in mind, identify actions you can take. If critical success factors and SMART action steps don't appeal to you, that's okay. Do something, anything that supports your inspiring goal or the items on your goal list.

- ◇ Talk to people who are living parts of your goal.
- ◇ Take a class related to your goal at the community college.
- ◇ Read about topics related to your goal.
- ◇ Take a working vacation to participate in some part of your goal.
- ◇ Join local activities that relate to your goal.
- ◇ If you need money to realize your goal, start a savings account and give it a specific name tied to the goal.
- ◇ Just do it!

Some actions are more nebulous than others, and thus harder to tackle. If an action lacks specificity, write down the characteristics of what success looks like. For example, we needed to find a place to live in France. France is a big country so we needed to narrow it down. We listed the characteristics of the location we could see ourselves in. Our list included: a small town, near an airport and train station, with a weekly market and bakeries, near the Mediterranean, with a warm climate and, later, near a major hospital. We made a similar list for the type of house we wanted to rent. Whatever your topic, characteristics narrow your focus and provide clarity.

To take action creates confidence and momentum. Your brain learns that you intend to achieve your goals and it makes you more observant of opportunities. As Katty Kay and Claire Shipman say in *The Confidence Code*, “Fear fades in the face of action.”

It's Your Turn: Critical Success Factors

Critical Success Factors: List the few items that **must** happen to achieve your goal.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

Set Goals With Heart

Action Steps for Critical Success Factors

A. _____

Action	Timing (near, mid, long-term)/Indicators
--------	--

B. _____

Action	Timing (near, mid, long-term)/Indicators
--------	--

C. _____

Action	Timing (near, mid, long-term)/Indicators
--------	--

D. _____

Action	Timing (near, mid, long-term)/Indicators
--------	--

Release the Outcome

Now comes perhaps the hardest part: once you have your goal in mind and have developed action steps to achieve it, release your attachment to the outcome. If we over-think our goal, we rigidly attach to the outcome *and* to what we think is the one right path to get there.

Maybe it's just me, but I have a limited imagination. I conceive of the most routine pathways to reach my goals. I'm proud that I have a good plan of action; you should have one, too. But if we think too hard about the plan or the specific version of the goal, we lose the big picture and the magic. The magic happens when we hold the plan and the outcome softly, lightly. Leave room for flexibility and

creativity that enable options to arise, pathways to multiply and the outcome to grow to something better.

I had *just* made my goal list the week before. One of the many items listed was a visit the Netherlands during tulip season. My boss walked into my office and asked if I could represent her at an international meeting. You guessed it: The meeting was in the Netherlands, in April. This was a highly unusual offer. International travel was reserved for the big-wigs and I was not one. But there it was—exactly as I had written it on my goal list. I still remember the vast fields of multicolored tulips and blue hyacinth. Daffodils were so plentiful that the locals braided them into wreaths for the grilles of their cars. The trip was totally unexpected, unplanned and pure magic.

Timing is everything and you can't *figure* out when the timing is right. Be patient, continue to take action, and trust that the time will come. Even though Thinking You clamors for answers such as What, When and How the goal will be achieved, Feeling You knows to be patient and let it unfold. Feel the peace and confidence that comes with detachment and trust.

Deepak Chopra writes about the Law of Detachment. He speaks of making this commitment: "I will not rigidly impose my idea of how things should be. I will not force solutions on problems, thereby creating new problems. I will participate in everything with detached involvement." Great words, and easier said than done. If you pay attention, you *feel* when you're trying too hard and over-thinking it. When that happens, take a step back and relax.

Stay attentive and watchful for opportunities that may not be what you expect. Watch for synchronicities, repeated situations or patterns, or that sense of "Here we go again!" A coincidence may be

Set Goals With Heart

an opportunity in disguise. Give yourself the freedom to imagine and accept a variation of your goal. Trust that you get what you need, when you need it, and in a form that's most appropriate for all. Release control. *If I can, you can.* Trust me on that one!

To do all we can requires brain power and focused action. To release the outcome *and* the pathway to the outcome requires deep trust. It's hard to do, particularly for over-thinkers. It is easy for our mind to glom onto a specific outcome and the way to achieve it. But the path may not be what we expect, and results may not come when we expect them. It takes heart to hold on to the goal and allow it to show up when and how it is meant to.

We are not in control. I know, that's a tough one. I'll say it again. We are not in control. Our role is to ask consistently, be diligent in our pursuit, and attentive, watchful and accepting of the outcome.

Set Goals with Heart

...the Highlights

You can be part of the ten percent who regularly set and achieve their goals. The key is to start out by feeling your way to your most fulfilling goals.

Set Goals

- ✓ Use your heart to list goals and define an inspiring goal. This is not a thinking exercise; it comes from Feeling You.
- ✓ Create your goal list. Write down all the things you want to have, do, or be in your life. Write fast before Thinking You kicks in.

- ✓ Set an inspiring goal. What would you do if you knew you couldn't fail? Describe it and keep it close at hand.
- ✓ Develop your rituals and reminders. Use rituals and reminders to keep your goals at the front of your mind. Put your goals in writing. It's important. Just do it.

Take Action

- ✓ Use your brain to identify critical success factors or SMART action steps.

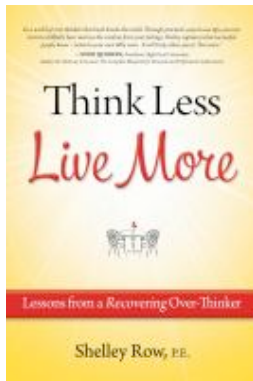
Release the Outcome

- ✓ Take action but in a flexible way. Allow yourself to see unexpected opportunities that arise that may provide a creative new path or an enriched outcome. Surrender control and trust the timing.

Words of Gratitude

*I am grateful for the courage to set and pursue my inspired goals
whether or not the outcome is what I expected.*





For a world of chronic over-thinkers, this book holds the key. In eight easy steps, discover the essential role feelings play in creating a more fulfilling life and rewarding career. With wit, stories and a bit of science, the book shares tips from an executive, engineer, and recovering over-thinker on how to live with meaning by thinking less. Built-in exercises allow you to put the tips to work immediately. Don't over-think it - start reading now!

Think Less, Live More

Lessons From a Recovering Over-Thinker

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