

FINE POINT

Assumptions and Feelings

Thinking Environment

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ASSUMPTIONS and FEELINGS

At the moment some of the popular neuroscience asserts that feelings come before thoughts.

But based on our experience with Thinkers, I teach a different analysis of feelings and thoughts.

I teach that our experience in Thinking Sessions is our guide to understanding the nature of thoughts and feelings. Our experience, so far, is roughly this:

When someone is in a Thinking Environment, they will generate thoughts and feelings. Thoughts and feelings intermingle. It is important to allow both, and not to force either.

When someone establishes a further goal to feel something (or to stop feeling something), they can achieve the goal by doing two things. First, they can identify the untrue assumption that is stopping them from feeling the way they want to feel (or that is making them feel the way they want to stop feeling). Then they can replace that assumption with one that is credible and liberating. This 'replacement' process is the asking of an Incisive Question whose construct seems to be precisely what the brain needs. (We conclude

this because when deconstructed the brain's breakthrough reveals this kind of question.) This Incisive Question engages the brain with the liberating assumption. This hypothetical, Thinker-generated engagement with the assumption changes the Thinker's feeling.

Therefore, from our experience of Thinking Sessions, we notice that assumptions seem to produce and change feelings.

So what does that experience say about the idea that feelings come before thoughts?

The concept of 'assumption' sounds like a cognitive construct (i.e., a thought) to me. (I define an assumption as the brain's interpretation of a perception (whether languaged or not). But if the neuroscientists are right that feelings always precede thoughts, we would have to conclude that an assumption is not a thought, But if it is not a thought, what is it? :-)

No one yet has offered a coherent answer to that question. So to mitigate the controversy for the moment I have stopped saying that thoughts cause and change feelings. I am saying instead that assumptions cause and change feelings. I am happy for others to figure out how to distinguish assumptions from thoughts.

One day perhaps we will know what exactly an assumption is in neurological terms. And for that matter, maybe we will know what a thought is that is completely distinct from a feeling. At the moment I think that science is still distant from a complete understanding (or even an accurate partial understanding) of how the brain works and what, if anything (which I doubt), is fully compartmentalisable from anything else. Thoughts and feelings will, I feel pretty sure, turn out to be two aspects of the same thing, intertwined and symbiotic. As is the body, and nature, as a whole.

Observably, feelings seem to emerge from two sources:

1

purely chemical catalysts (drugs, food, exercise, cell deterioration, other physically-induced hormone changes in the body)

2
assumptions

Can you think of any other sources of feelings?

In summary: I think that our experience is our dependable guide to the origin and changing of feelings. And our experience is that removing and replacing assumptions changes feelings.

I am keen to follow the current neuroscience and to notice whether it describes our experience. I am not keen to describe our experience to fit the current neuroscience.