**7 Steps to a Nourishing Mindset**

*By Paige Dest*

What you allow to grow in the garden of your mind can become beautiful and colorful flowers – or it can become a weed-ridden wasteland. Our mind is always on the move, creating thoughts about our past, our future, our surrounding environment, and our current state of being. Often, these thoughts flow so fast that we barely have time to catch them, much less deal with them. But we have the capacity to do just this - we have the choice. It then becomes a choice of being healthy.

We decide what to eat to keep our bodies healthy, what exercises to do to keep our muscles strong, and what clothes to wear to protect us from the elements - and we can also decide what thoughts we allow to linger and build our mental resilience. Creating a safe, personal space for our thoughts to flow is a decision each of us must make. Having this space takes perseverance, care, and focus on seeing setbacks as temporary and disappointments as isolated. It takes having true acceptance that each emotion we feel has a meaning, a purpose. It takes realizing the reason for the emotion and the opportunity to grow from that reason. It takes recognizing that the emotion doesn’t have to last and understanding that “this, too, shall pass.”

Emotions are neurohormones that pass through our bodies in about 6 seconds, so generally speaking, anything you feel longer than these few seconds is your mind playing the emotion over and over again. The nourishing mindset will look to use the emotion as “food”, a way to nourish your thoughts, helping you to push away the negative internal speech and replacing it with positive agile thoughts. But it’s not easy, and it takes practice. It takes being mindful and vigilant of our thoughts, giving permission only to those that will serve us well and help build a beautiful garden.

Here are 7 steps to nourish your mindset when experiencing anxiety:

1. First and foremost, be patient with yourself. Think of yourself as your own best friend. Breathe.
2. Put the situation or thought into perspective. Ask yourself what inner belief is posing this negative or fearful thought.
3. Determine what the worst thing about the situation is. Determine what the best thing about the situation is, even if it’s that you’ve learned a lesson. Remember, “sometimes you win, sometimes you learn.” Determine the middle ground between the worst thing and the best thing.
4. Picture your life as if you were in the middle ground. What do you feel? What sensations are you experiencing in your body? Breathe.
5. Acknowledge that the moment will pass, that you have survived, that you can experience calmness.
6. Once the thought comes into your mind again (and it inevitably will), remember this moment and push it aside. Remember that you have worked through this, that it is in the past, and that logic dictates you can move forward.
7. Mentally move forward. Only YOU can cause yourself to stay in the past negative thought pattern. But you DO have the power and strength to stay in the positive thought pattern.