

Think Your Life Into Action

Brenda Basham Dothage

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This book teaches new ways to learn to love yourself, mistakes and all.

It's not often that an author will use her experience of getting arrested and spending a few days in jail as an example of how having a positive self-image can improve a person's life. In *Think Your Life Into Action*, Brenda Basham Dothage uses this and other anecdotes to drive home her belief that having a positive self-image leads to positive thoughts and that those thoughts lead to better outcomes. Dothage believes that if you think about something hard enough, it will come true.

Dothage is a counselor and runs self-image workshops. She developed a system for improving self-image by categorizing it into four levels: negative, semi-negative, semi-positive, and positive. Each level has its own chapter in this book, and each chapter discusses appropriate steps for moving toward the positive—for example, keeping a daily journal, working toward forgiving oneself, and laughing out loud every day.

The more positive the self-image, the more effort is needed to maintain it. The author gives examples of ways to do this, such as embracing individuality and not judging other people. Dothage includes useful tips for implementing such strategies. For example, along with the tip for daily journal writing, she explains that the reader should write down the words "How do I feel?" and then answer that question honestly, being sure to ask "why" until his or her true feelings are revealed.

Dothage's voice comes through clearly in her writing. She has a no-nonsense style that inspires trust, like a good friend who always tells the truth. When discussing the topic of past trauma, she doesn't coddle the reader: "The past is over. Yes it did happen. We lived it, survived it, and we are still here. Now it's over and it's time to move forward." Dothage doesn't just lecture, though. She offers useful suggestions for how to move on, such as writing about a past event without missing a single detail so that nothing is left to fester.

At times, the text can be repetitive, with the same idea stated in multiple ways: "We will always have equal amounts of love and respect for our self and for others. We can only give to others as much love and respect as we have for our self. In other words we can only love and respect other people as much as we love and respect ourselves."

Dothage's belief in the power of positive thinking may be difficult for some people to fully accept—they won't all buy the idea that simply visualizing themselves being safe and sound will protect them from a hurricane. Still, *Think Your Life Into Action* offers some great tips for improving self-image which is something that will be helpful to many people.

CHRISTINE CANFIELD (October 28, 2013)

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