

THE JORDAN HARBINGER SHOW

Worksheet for Mark Manson | Channeling Hope, Choosing Problems, and Changing Values (Episode 198)

Our feelings control us: the thinking brain and the feeling brain, seemingly forever at odds with one another. Rationality used to be the highest of human virtues; now it seems the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction. Many of us are convinced that our feelings are all that matter, and this thought trap lodges us firmly into a quagmire where we get stuck in one identity, unable to see past our own values and impulses.

The problem is that we puny humans actually need this conflict of values to derive meaning — and a lot of us have become too soft to cope with the dichotomy, which steers us directly toward a crisis of meaning. [In this episode](#), [*The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck: A Counterintuitive Approach to Living a Good Life*](#) and [*Everything Is F*cked: A Book About Hope*](#) author Mark Manson joins us to discuss the research behind this phenomenon and what we can do about it to correct course.

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Feeling + Thinking = Teamwork

In modern society, we're taught that we should pay close attention to what our thinking brain is doing — and put aside the illogical impulses of the feeling brain — if we want to succeed in the world of “adulting.” In truth, it's more accurate to think of them as two parts of a whole rather than rivals at odds with one another.

“The feeling brain is actually driving the car, and the thinking brain is drawing the map,” Mark says. “Ultimately, the thinking brain has no control. Anybody who's ever tried to lose 10 pounds by reading a book has experienced this: you cannot think your way to doing the correct action. The action needs to feel good in some way for you to continue doing it. In that sense, any issue of self-control, self-discipline, procrastination, underachievement, these are all fundamentally emotional problems, but we attack them as if they're logical problems...you have to find a way to emotionally enjoy whatever habit you're trying to take on for yourself. But if you're shutting down the thinking brain and just feeling all the time, you never actually create new meaning for your life.”

Do you tend to favor your feeling brain over your thinking brain — or vice versa? Think back to a recent decision of consequence and if it was guided more by emotional or rational factors — or what you'd consider a healthy balance of both. If one brain was favored over the other, how might the decision have turned out differently with a more even distribution between both?

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Changing Your Values

Your values aren't just collections of feelings — your values are stories. Your identity will stay your identity until a new experience acts against it.

“An experience is either something pleasurable or painful. If it's pleasurable, a positive emotion will emerge; if it's painful, a negative emotion will emerge. Our thinking brain has to construct the story or the narrative about ourselves that explains that emotion. This is why childhood trauma f*cks us up so much, because when you're a child, your thinking brain is still very poorly developed, and you don't understand why things happen to you. So if you are hurt in some intense way as a child, the story you construct will be very basic, like: 'I'm a bad boy. Nobody loves me.' Your identity is like a ball of yarn that starts getting wrapped up when you're a child and it keeps wrapping...the earlier it happens in your life, the further into the center it is; the more you have you have to unravel to get back to it. The only way these stories change is when...your thinking brain...reevaluates it, puts a new story to it, and then you live out that new story.”

The other way to change your values is to begin writing the narratives of your future self, to envision what life would be like if you had certain values or possessed a certain identity. By visualizing the future we want for ourselves, we allow our feeling brain to try on those values for size, to see what they feel like before we make the final purchase. Eventually, once we've done this enough, the feeling brain becomes accustomed to the new values and starts to believe them.

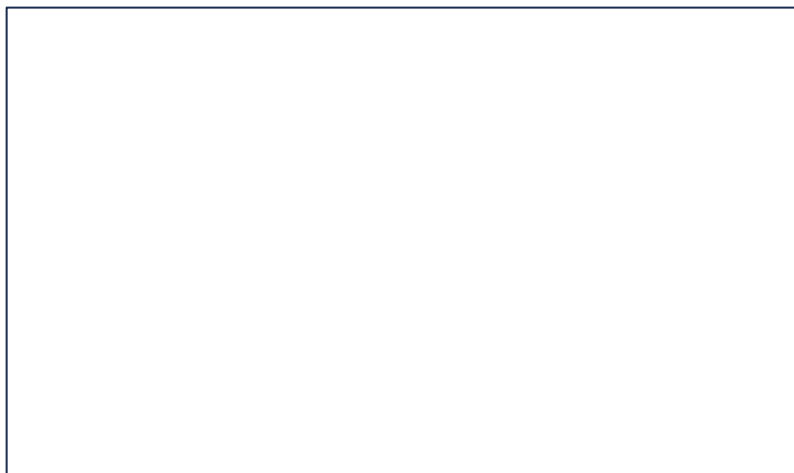
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The God Value

Whatever our feeling brain adopts as its highest value, this tippy top of our value hierarchy becomes the lens through which we interpret all other values. Mark calls this highest value the God value. Some people's God value is money. These people view all other things (family, love, prestige, politics) through the prism of money, and believe their family will love them only if they make enough money.

"We all have this hierarchy of values that determines our prioritization and helps us make decisions on where our time is best spent," Mark says. "In our value hierarchy, something is at the top, and I use the name God value...it's whatever our top value in our life is. It dictates the decision-making of everything underneath it; it becomes a lens by which everything else is perceived."

What's the God value that perches itself at the top of your priority hierarchy? How does it conflict with other values you hold, and how does it interact with your evidence-seeking, thinking brain? How does working through these conflicts and comparisons help you face what Mark calls *the uncomfortable truth*?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the prompt above.

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The Blue Dot Effect

The blue dot effect suggests that, essentially, the more we look for threats, the more we will see them, regardless of how safe or comfortable our environment actually is. And we see this playing out in the world today.

“Developmental psychology has long argued something similar: that protecting people from problems or adversity doesn’t make them happier or more secure — it makes them more easily insecure,” says Mark. “Trying to eliminate pain only increases your sensitivity to suffering, rather than alleviating your suffering. It causes you to see dangerous ghosts in every nook, to see tyranny and oppression in every authority, to see hate and deceit behind every embrace. If we don’t consciously choose our problems, then our brain is going to look for...and find [them] in silly, stupid places. That essentially describes Twitter in a nutshell!”

Choose your battles wisely. With only so many hours in the day and so many “problems” vying for your attention from every direction — whether it’s social media, your annoying coworker, a family member who knows how to push your buttons, that dumb song on the commercial you hate, or something else entirely — ask yourself: “Am I choosing my problems, or are my problems choosing me?”



Full show notes and resources for this episode [can be found here](#).

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About



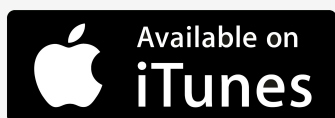
Join us as we get deep into the untapped wisdom of the world's top performers -- from legendary creators to intelligence operatives, iconoclastic writers to visionary change-makers.

We deconstruct the playbooks of the most successful people on earth -- and learn new strategies, perspectives, and insights you can't find anywhere else. Then, take these valuable insights into your own life and live what you listen.

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support@jordanharbinger.com

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