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Export date: Sun Nov 1 2:50:14 2026 / +0000 GMT

The Training of the Mind

Have you ever noticed memories, physical sensations, and feelings sometimes just pop up when least expected? The mind is strange. Perhaps as an adult you have experienced extreme excitement and anticipation, just like you felt when you were a young child opening gifts for your birthday or at Christmas.

Back then you could hardly contain your joy and anticipation so you danced around with delight until you opened the gift. Then you danced around some more! The mention of, or a picture of, your favourite dessert causes saliva to gather in your mouth. You are certain you can smell the delectable aroma even now. You see someone walking along a street and you are convinced you have just seen a specific person, except that person lives thousands of miles away or perhaps is no longer on earth.

As I was driving recently I found myself humming along mindlessly with an orchestra playing the song, ?Ave Maria.? My mother, who went to heaven almost thirty years ago, used to sing that song in Latin. I had no idea what the words meant but I do know they were precious to her and, to my ears, she sang like an angel.

When I realized I was humming this familiar tune, I found my mind flooded with memories. I could have chosen to remember tragedies from my childhood, but, I chose not to. Suddenly, on what was a hectic day with a long drive in heavy traffic, the song was a soothing, calming lullaby with me in my dear mother´s arms and the fragrance of her favourite perfume seemingly wafted over me.

Yes, the mind can do strange things. This illustration is from an inspirational speaker, Mr. Ed Foreman. Play along with me in this and use your imagination, pausing briefly...after each instruction. Now, pick up an imaginary lemon... Observe it... Roll it around in your hand... Feel the texture and the size of it... Smell it... Cut it with your imaginary knife... Wipe away the spray of lemon juice that just missed your eyes... Observe the intricate pattern of the pulp? Smell it again deeply... And now, take a BIG bite!!!

There, did you pucker up and maybe even shuddered involuntarily in that instant? The point is, the subconscious mind cannot tell the difference between an imagined event and an actual event you have experienced. We need to train our mind to think about things that are pleasing and energy giving and not get hung up on the things which drag us down and cause us to shudder years after the actual, or imagined, event.

How you train your mind is your choice, which will impact your physical, mental, and spiritual well being. While it is good to be aware to some degree of what is going on in the world, I urge you to not get wrapped up in the sordid details of evil or tragic events.

For training the mind we read in Philippians 4: 5-9, ?Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.? While we may not be thankful for what happened, we can be thankful we can present our requests to God to give us wisdom in how we can respond positively.

Celebrate the good and remember to not be anxious about anything. As the final few words of Phil. 4:9 say, ?And the God of peace will be with you.?

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