

DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU THINK



The mind is a meaning-making machine. It creates stories out of fragments of information to help us make sense of our experiences, remember important things, and plan for the future. Sometimes the stories are true and helpful, but often they are neither true nor helpful and can fuel destructive emotions.

Our tendency to believe all of the thoughts in our mind is often a significant source of stress in our lives.

When we practice observing our thoughts as passing phenomena, like temporary weather patterns, we cultivate a new, non-reactive relationship to them and develop an important insight: **thoughts are not the world - thoughts are just thoughts.** Just as items listed on a restaurant menu are not the same as the actual food, thoughts in the mind are mere representations of reality.

As a rule of thumb, we don't concern ourselves with the content of thinking during meditation practice. While meditating, **we treat all thoughts like clouds in the sky.** The content or story the mind tells is not important. It doesn't matter if it's an interesting, delightful, anxious, accurate or inaccurate thought. Even if we think it's a million dollar idea, we can simply acknowledge it with bare attention or label it "thinking" and let it be.

When we bring a kind, accepting and allowing attention to our thoughts through mindfulness, **we learn to let them go, gaining greater perspective and a profound sense of freedom.**