

FUTURE DIRECTED THERAPY®

THINK FORWARD
TO
THRIVE



FUTURE DIRECTED THERAPY®

THINK FORWARD TO THRIVE

HOW TO USE THE MIND'S POWER
OF ANTICIPATION TO TRANSCEND
YOUR PAST AND TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE



Jennice Vilhauer, PhD


Avante Books
Los Angeles

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Published and distributed in the United States of America by
Avante Books
7336 Santa Monica Blvd. #235
Los Angeles, CA 90046

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Vilhauer, Jennice.

Think forward to thrive : how to use the mind's power of anticipation to transcend your past and transform your life / Jennice Vilhauer.

p. : ill., forms ; cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN: 978-0-9888352-9-0 (trade paper)

1. Cognitive therapy--Popular works. 2. Affective disorders--Treatment. 3. Visualization.
4. Self-actualization (Psychology) 5. Well-being. I. Title. II. Title: Future directed therapy

RC489.C63 V55 2013

616.89/1425 2013936617

2013936617

Cover Design by The Book Designers
Interior Design by David Moratto

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

—ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

*To my patients and my students
who always inspire me this is for you.*

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Chapter 1

A NEW BEGINNING



Live out your imagination, not your history.

—STEPHEN R. COVEY

Imagine that you're traveling through the journey of life in a car and you are the driver. Most people are unclear what direction they are heading much of the time, and many get through life never even learning how to really drive. They manage to operate their car in a default mode that allows them to zigzag through life with very little control. Many people get stuck and stalled, while others hit dead ends or go in circles, feeling like they never get anywhere. The goal of Future Directed Therapy (FDT) is to teach people how to drive the car, then give them a road map for how to get where they want to go in life and, most importantly, stay on course.

THE ROAD TO WELL-BEING

What most people don't realize is that the journey of life has only two directions: toward well-being and away from it. Your thoughts and your actions power your car. Your emotions indicate where you are going. If you are feeling bad in some way, it means you're thinking thoughts that are taking you away from well-being and moving you toward distress. Because we don't control time and our life keeps progressing, you can never completely stop and stand still. You are always moving, whether it be toward thriving or toward not thriving. Allowing a negative stream of thought to flow through your mind does not just prevent you from moving toward what you want; it takes you further away from it. The longer you let your thoughts carry you in that direction, the further away you get from where you want to be going.

By the time you are feeling very painful emotions, such as anxiety or depression, your thoughts have been flowing as though your car were going a hundred miles an hour headed in the wrong direction. You can't just shift your car into reverse when you

are going that fast. You need to slow it down until you are ready to turn it around. The same thing is true of your thought process. In FDT, you will learn how to turn yourself around by redirecting your thinking and reaching for improvements in thought rather than trying to make large leaps that often lead to a crash and burn or, at the very least, get you no closer to your desired destination.

While all human beings are in a constant state of creating their futures, most are not very aware of how the process is actually occurring, and as a result, they have limited control over what they experience. Learning to break free from creating your future by default and instead learning to create your future by choice starts with gaining awareness of your thought process and then developing skills that will give you greater ability to choose the life you want to live.

Everything you *want* is in the future, whether that future is just moments or years away. You want things that promote your ability to thrive and lead to feeling good, and you don't want things that move you away from that. The problem for many people is that when they focus on what they want and start to think about implementing plans to get there, they often confront real-world challenges. These challenges can pull them away from focusing on what is wanted and cause them to focus instead on the unwanted obstacles, which in turn lead to negative emotions such as discouragement and disappointment. If you stay focused on unwanted things for long enough, you will start to experience even more serious psychological distress.

In order to create your future by choice, you will need to learn not only how to identify what it is you want, but how to use your very powerful thought and behavioral resources to help you get past barriers in your life. FDT was developed to teach the skills that will help you allocate your thoughts and behavior most effectively toward what you want, which, if done consistently, can lead to greater thriving, improved emotional well-being, and more of the future experiences you desire.

RECREATING THE PAST

Most people create their future by recreating the past. The ability to recreate the past has a high degree of survival value for humans. If we find a good source of food or a safe place to sleep, we want to be able to find it again. If we have a pleasant encounter with someone, we want to have a similar experience again. Our memory is what gives us the ability to store information about our past and present experiences. We use this stored information to formulate expectations about our environment and to make predictions about what our future experiences will be like. Being able to predict or anticipate the future enables us to prepare for it by taking the actions we think are necessary to meet future events with success.

For example, if you are someone who has been lucky enough to go through life for the most part having positive experiences with other people, like loving parents, lots of friends, great teachers, and nice bosses, you probably enjoyed these experiences. Because you have had so many positive past experiences, you have probably developed the expectation that most people you meet in the future will treat you well. If you expect people to treat you well, you will likely act in a friendly, open way with new people you meet. Your friendly behavior will almost certainly bring out friendly behavior in others, recreating your past experiences and confirming your expectation that people treat you well.

This system works great if you have a past that you want to recreate. However, for those who would like to break free from the past and create a different future, this system can keep them trapped unknowingly. If you have had a lot of experiences in your past that you didn't like, chances are you are expecting the future to bring similar experiences even if you don't want them. And you are acting in ways consistent with what you expect, thereby recreating experiences similar to those past experiences you disliked. The good news is that, once you are aware of it, you can stop this process and do something different. Your past does not have to define who you are or where you are going.

While our past history is a major source of information that we use to predict the future, it is not the only means by which we can create the future. We have the ability to become aware of this process as it is happening in the present moment. Once we are aware of it, we can intercept the process and consciously choose to think new thoughts that have the potential to grow into new anticipatory beliefs. These new expectations will lead to taking different actions that will create a different future. We can also use newly learned information about who we are today to help identify what we are capable of going forward.

Most people create their future by recreating the past.

The other good news is that learning to create a future experience is a skill-based activity that anyone can learn¹³. Research has shown that people who successfully do things to create their future, such as setting goals, planning, and problem solving, consistently experience greater well-being¹⁴⁻¹⁶, while people with fewer of these skills tend to experience more negative emotions, which can lead to serious conditions such as depression^{17, 18}. If you keep reading, this book will teach you the skills you need to break out of old patterns and habits so that, with a little effort, you can stop recreating your past and improve your ability to make different choices and create more of the experiences you would like to have in your life.

EXAMPLE: Kelly was in her early 40s and had been unhappy with her marriage for many years. She largely depended on her husband's approval in order to feel good, and even slight criticism from him could land her in bed for several days at a time. Kelly knew she had "married her father," who had always been distant and overly critical while she was growing up. Kelly always worked hard at being "perfect" to avoid the criticism she didn't want, but when her strategy of being perfect failed for any reason, or she didn't receive the positive reinforcement she craved, she would spiral into bouts of negative emotion and self-criticism. Kelly had been in other types of therapy for many years, and she was easily able to recognize that she had recreated the relationship dynamics she had with her father and that she was acting in ways that were continuing the pattern with her husband, but she had never been able to break the cycle and do something different. When Kelly began FDT, instead of trying to help her understand her past, the focus was on helping her identify a new pattern of future behavior she wanted for herself, which included putting her own self-approval over everyone else's and seeing her husband as an equal, not as someone she had to work so hard to please. The plan for her treatment then became focused on teaching her the skills to help her achieve what she wanted and overcome the obstacles that were getting in the way. Initially she struggled with breaking her old patterns; she had difficulty creating a visual image in her mind of what it would be like to respond differently and to see herself as someone with more self-confidence. With practice, however, she developed the awareness to recognize when the old patterns were kicking in so that she could implement her new skills. This eventually led to improved self-esteem and a more equal and fulfilling relationship with her husband.

CREATING A NEW FUTURE EXPERIENCE

Creating a new future experience is not necessarily difficult. There are four basic steps. First, you have to initiate a thought about something you want that doesn't yet exist. For example, *I want a new job*. Next, you need to imagine what that would look like. *I would like to be a manager at a retail company, not in sales*. Then you must anticipate the tasks necessary to make it happen. *I need to create a resume that shows why I would be qualified to do this job; then I need to search the Internet for open positions; then I need to mail my resume*, and so on. Finally, you will need to execute the tasks you have anticipated. While these four basic steps may sound relatively easy, there are many obstacles along the way that can trip people up. In a lot of ways, creating your future is like weight loss.

Everyone knows how to lose weight: eat less and exercise more. But people struggle every day with this issue because of the many complex barriers that get in the way; hence, helping people lose weight is a multi-billion-dollar industry. Likewise, everyone knows to some degree how to create their future because they do it every day, all day. But very few people know how to actively direct this process in a way that regularly leads to successful outcomes or how to get around the many barriers that may come up. You will learn in the upcoming chapters how to approach life from a place of awareness and successfully complete the steps to creating a desired future experience, as well as how to overcome the roadblocks that can get in the way.

WHAT ABOUT THE PRESENT MOMENT?

The power to alter the course of change in life lies in the present moment of awareness. However, we cannot hold on to the present moment. The present moment is what just passed; it just passed; it just passed; it is gone; it is gone; it is gone. The future is always what is arriving; it just arrived; it just arrived; it just arrived; it is here; it is here; it is here; it is always here. The now and the arrival of the future are one and the same, and you have tremendous power to influence what future will arrive to become the now you experience.

A good deal of emphasis has been placed on “being in the present moment” by psychologists, popular-culture authors, and spiritual leaders, so much so that thinking about the future has gotten a bad rap. While being aware of thoughts and feelings in the present moment is an important skill to have, keeping thoughts only in the present moment will not create a better future all by itself. If you want something different, you will need to think forward and plan for something different to arrive. While thinking about the future can cause fear and anxiety if you focus on things in the future that you don’t want, focusing on the negative is not an inherent component of future thinking. Learning how to think about the future in a positive, constructive way is essential to creating a life you desire. Being aware of the present moment gives you the opportunity to make conscious choices, but it isn’t sufficient by itself to help you improve your future and what arrives in your experience. There is much more you need to know if you want to create true change in your life, so keep reading!

THE FEELING OF THRIVING

We achieve a sense of well-being when we know we are moving in the direction of continuous growth and improved life experiences. This movement toward growth and improved life experience is known as *thriving*. Every human being wants to thrive in life, and it is an ongoing process, meaning no one ever reaches a state where the desire

to thrive stops. Even those whose profoundly difficult life circumstances have caused them to become frustrated, or to believe that thriving is not possible, continue to desire improvement in their experience. Each time we reach what we believe is a wanted state of thriving, it gives us a new vantage point from which another new want is born. For example, when you first started high school, you wanted to graduate; as time went on and you anticipated that achievement, you formulated other wants, like getting a job or going to college. If you chose college, when you first showed up you probably just wanted to enjoy the experience; then, as time went by and you began to anticipate your college degree, you probably started to think about what other opportunities were now open to you, and you formulated new wants about what you planned to achieve next in life. Thriving is therefore not a destination where we arrive and are then permanently fulfilled, but rather an ongoing experience of personal growth and evolution.

Thriving is subjective and relative. What you perceive as thriving and moving forward in life is completely defined by your own set of circumstances, and it may be very different from someone else's idea of thriving. Someone who is starving wants to obtain a source of food; someone with an adequate food supply turns his or her wants in the direction of other increased means of thriving, such as safe and comfortable shelter. Thriving can include almost any human activity, such as building strong relationships with others or improving our own psychological or spiritual insight. For someone like Bill Gates, who has all that money can buy, the desire to thrive can take the form of feeling gratification from helping mankind at large to thrive more through humanitarian efforts.

While thriving is a subjective state, in FDT one premise is that what people really seek in life is the process of growth, including psychological, mental, and physical expansion. When something is too easy and doesn't challenge us, the reward we get from achieving it is low. When we achieve something that we work toward, we appreciate and value it much more¹⁹⁻²¹. For example, if you set a goal to improve your health by walking half a block a day, you may be able to achieve it with relative ease; however, your sense of personal gratification and accomplishment, as well as your body's physical improvement, will probably be significantly lower than if you had set the goal to run a 10K, trained for weeks, and then crossed the finish line in under your targeted time. Now you are on your way to reaching for your next target, which might be to run a marathon. Constantly reaching for increased states of thriving causes us to continue to grow and evolve as people.

When humans perceive that their survival or ability to thrive is being threatened in some way, they experience psychological distress and negative emotions. Your emotions act as an internal guidance system that knows when you are moving in the direction of thriving or away from it, as when the GPS tracking system in your car tells you that you are getting closer to or farther away from your intended destination. When humans are in a state of thriving, they have a natural sense of psychological well-being, and they experience positive emotions. Here are a few examples.

Example 1. Social relationships are vital to humans' survival and thriving. When we have positive, strong relationships with people in our lives, such as our parents, partners, children, or coworkers, we generally feel good and happy about those relationships. When we are in conflict with others and our relationships with them are threatened in some way, we generally feel upset and experience negative emotions.

Example 2. Money buys us many things that promote survival and thriving. When people feel they don't have "enough" money, they generally start to feel anxious and distressed. How much is enough is a matter of individual perception, but when there is a perceived shortage or a belief that there is *not enough*, it can generate negative emotion.

Example 3. Safety is essential to human survival and thriving. If you don't feel safe in the world because you believe bad things will happen and you don't feel able to stop them, you are likely to experience distress and negative emotions.

If you are experiencing psychological distress that is causing negative emotions, it is an indicator that you do not feel you are thriving in some area or areas of your life. More importantly, you are most likely feeling uncertain or unhelpful about your ability to increase your level of thriving or improve the situation in the future. As you continue reading this book, you will learn to identify thoughts and beliefs that you may be holding about your future that are keeping you from thriving, and, very importantly, you will learn how you can more effectively use your thoughts about the future to promote a sense of greater well-being and generate more positive emotions.

HOW CAN YOU THRIVE MORE AND FEEL BETTER?

Feeling better in life and experiencing a better future doesn't just happen because you want it to. It will require that you do some work that may, at times, seem quite difficult. There are, however, certain things that you can do as you read this book to set the stage for your success. Read the following concepts carefully and try to absorb their meaning before moving on, because they are preconditions for successfully making a lasting change in your life.

BE WILLING TO CHANGE

Without a willingness to change, there can be no better future. Change is difficult; the thought alone can inspire fear and anxiety. You may have had many experiences in the past that cause you to doubt that your life can ever be different or that change is even possible. These past experiences may have caused you to close yourself off from things that you really want. You may fear failure. You may believe that it is other people who

should change. However, you are the only one with the ability to change your life and create a different future.

Willingness to change is not the same as wanting to feel better. Everyone wants to feel better, but many people are not willing to do what it takes to make that happen. Willingness to change means you are open to doing something different and learning a new way of being in the world. If you are open and willing, then change and new opportunities are possible.

Past experiences do not define who you are unless you allow them to. You are free to change at any time. There are many concepts and ideas in this book that may challenge your existing way of thinking or doing things, but if you approach them with an attitude of willingness, you will open yourself to the possibility of changing your life. The only thing you should be unwilling to do is to lead a life in which your choices are made from a place of fear. When you are willing, you are facing a situation from a position of courage and strength. Be willing to let go of the fear and say yes to new possibilities, experiences, and opportunities. Before reading any further, close your eyes, take a deep breath and ask yourself:

ASK YOURSELF

Am I willing to change?

ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY

Everything you do matters! Every action you take, every thought you think, contributes to shaping your future. Each of your thoughts and actions builds on others, generating more thoughts and actions of a similar nature that eventually lead to creating an experience that you live. If you begin to accept and recognize the significance of everything you do and all the choices that you make and treat each thought and action with the respect it is due, your life will begin to transform more rapidly than you could ever imagine.

The key to beginning to live life in recognition of the fact that everything you do matters is taking full responsibility for all of your thoughts and behaviors. There may be people who have hurt you in your life. Those people do not choose your thoughts or behaviors now. The past can only continue to hurt you if you allow it to. There is nothing more tragic than allowing people who have hurt you in the past to continue controlling your future because you refuse to give up believing that the unhappiness in your life is their fault. You are the only one with the power to change your life, but it is a responsibility that you must accept by recognizing that everything you do matters.



PRACTICE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Complete the worksheet “Am I Willing?” on page 28. Write down three things you would like to see change or be different in your life by the end of this course. As was discussed in the section “How Can You Thrive More and Feel Better?,” wanting change and being willing to change are two different things. The people who achieve change are the ones who are willing. Go through each of the three items you list as areas of your life where you would like to see change and read the five Ask Yourself questions.

It is very likely that at this early stage in the process you may have a lot of resistant thoughts that come up as you go through these questions, such as “*I want to change but I feel scared, or I want change but I don’t believe it is possible.*” Write down any of these thoughts. There are no right or wrong thoughts, this is about finding out where your resistance may be so that you can be aware of it. When you are aware of an obstacle and prepare for it, you are far more likely to successfully get past it. How to get past resistant thinking will be addressed in later chapters.

AM I WILLING?

<p>What would I like to change in my life?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ASK YOURSELF</p>	<p>What thoughts come up when I think about these questions? Which of the five am I likely to have difficulty with?</p>
<p>Example: I would like to have better relationships with people in my life.</p>	<p>1. Am I willing to change? I am willing to be open to the process of learning new material and trying new behaviors.</p> <p>2. Am I willing to accept responsibility? I am the only one who can choose my thoughts and behaviors in the present moment which will lead to creating a better future.</p>	<p>I am willing to do these things, but what if other people still don't like me? What if I change but no one else does?</p>
<p>1.</p>	<p>1.</p>	<p>1.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>3. Am I willing to own my choices? The choices I make are powerful and contribute significantly to the life I create.</p>	<p>1.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>4. Am I willing to participate in the process? I am willing to show up for class and do my reading and practice assignments.</p> <p>5. Am I willing to commit to staying the course? I will am willing to complete the FDT class and/or read the book through to the end even if it seems hard at some points.</p>	<p>1.</p>

- Your thoughts are leading you toward well-being or away from it, and your emotions are telling you which direction you are going. If you feel good, you know you are headed toward thriving and well-being.
- If you are experiencing negative emotions, it is because you are focused on some unwanted aspect of your life or some situation that is not leading you toward thriving.
- With the right frame of mind, you can start to feel better and set yourself up to be successful at changing your future.
 - Be willing to change: If you want something different, you will have to do something different.
 - Accept responsibility: What you do in the present moment creates the next present moment that arrives in your experience. Everything you do matters!
 - Participate in the process: If where you want to go in life seems unclear, the steps can unfold as long as you participate in following every thread you know to follow and continue to search for the right path.
 - Stay the course: There is distance and travel time between where you are and where you want to go. If you turn around before you get there, you will never arrive.
 - Beware of the barriers to progress:
 - Discomfort is different from distress. It may sometimes feel strange to do something different. If stepping outside of your comfort zone is feeling distressful, you can take a step back until you feel a more tolerable sense of discomfort and refocus your thoughts on why you want to do it.
 - Thoughts and feelings are two different things. You can act differently than you feel. If you don't feel like doing the practice assignments, you can still do them anyway.
 - Human beings have the ability to hold on to beliefs that are not true. Many of our beliefs are formed early in life, and as adults, many of those beliefs are no longer useful to us. Because we create our future with our belief system, it is worth considering whether you may have some beliefs that are limiting the choices you are making about your future.
 - Practice what you learn!
 - Embrace the journey. You don't have to arrive at a better destination in order to feel better; you just have to be heading in the right direction.

THE VALUE OF YOUR THOUGHTS



*That which dominates our imaginations and our thoughts
will determine our lives, and our character.*

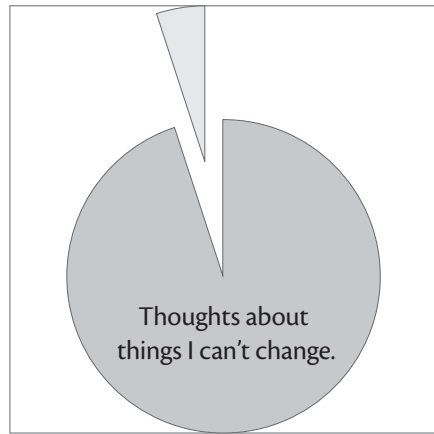
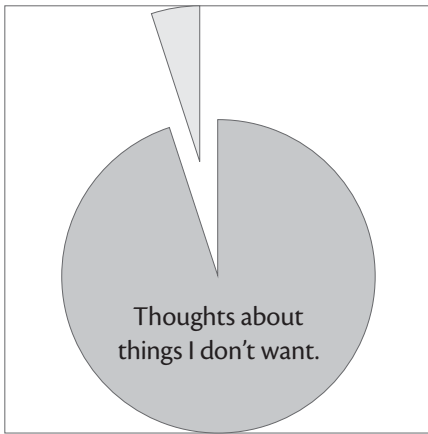
—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Thought is what determines the direction we take in the journey of life and carries us into the future. Thoughts are the creative force of all human beings. There is nothing that we can do without first thinking about it. Thoughts power every choice we make and shape the very existence we live. Thought is the most valuable resource that we have. However, because thoughts flow through our head all day long and may seem to be in endless supply, we are often not that aware of how we are spending our thoughts.

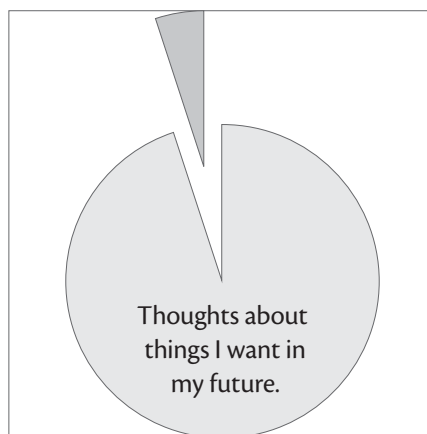
CONSCIOUS THOUGHT IS A LIMITED RESOURCE

There are a limited number of thoughts we can think at any one time. Thought-flow studies have shown that, on average, our brains think about 50,000 thoughts per day. Most of our thoughts are actually the same from day to day²⁵. *Should I get out of bed now? What should I have for breakfast? It's time to walk the dog. What should I wear to work? Which route should I take to avoid traffic?*

Because thoughts are a limited resource, like money and time, we have to make choices about how we are spending our thought process to make sure that we are getting what we want from our thoughts. How you spend your thought process is very much like how you spend your money. You would never walk into a store, decide you didn't like something, and then say, *That's what I will spend my money on*, yet that's what many unhappy people do with their thinking. They spend a good deal of their thoughts on all the things in life they don't want and can't change, and they spend very little thought on what they do want and how they are going to achieve it.



Imagine what your life would be like if you reversed the pattern and, instead, spent most of your thought process thinking about how to improve your future and achieve the things you want. This is what successful, happy people do—people who get what they want out of life. They use their thought process wisely and spend it thinking about how to make what they want happen. Thoughts keep flowing through your mind all day long. It is important that you make the effort to have them flow in the direction that brings you the most benefit.



WE SPEND THOUGHT WITH OUR ATTENTION

When we are purchasing something with the limited resource of money, we are generally making transactions with cash, checks, or credit cards, but the way we spend thought is with our attention. Attention is the level of conscious awareness that we have the ability to direct in order to notice or focus on something in our environment. We think about whatever we are focused on, and subsequently, attention is the gateway to what we experience in life.

Our attentional processing has a limited capacity²⁶, meaning we can only process a limited number of things at one time. Because there is much, much more that goes on in our environment around us than we could ever possibly pay attention to, the limited capacity of our attention creates the *illusion of awareness*²⁷. In other words, while we think we see and are aware of what is happening around us, the reality is that we are only aware of a small amount of what is going on in our environment, and we are missing lots of other things without even realizing it. It is almost like watching TV. There are way more channels than you could ever watch at one time. Just because you aren't watching all of them doesn't mean they aren't there.

In order to maximize the use of the limited amount of attention we have, our brains generate selective filters through a process called *priming*, which increases the brain's sensitivity to detecting certain things in our environment. Priming can occur intentionally or unintentionally, but in either case it tells the brain what to selectively pay attention to^{28, 29}. You can think of the process of priming as a mechanism similar to a TV that allows you to selectively "tune in" to what it is you want to see. For example, you may have had the experience of purchasing a new car and then suddenly noticing that lots of people on the road seem to be driving your car as well. The reality is that all those people you are seeing didn't go out and buy the same car just because you did. Those people were there, driving those same cars, all along. You just weren't noticing them until you primed yourself to notice them by purchasing the car yourself. Here's another example: if you ask someone how many people he or she sees wearing red T-shirts every day, the average person will probably give a random guess of a fairly low number, like two or three. If you ask people to count every day for a week how many people they see wearing red T-shirts, at the end of the week they will almost always say they can't believe how many people wear red T-shirts. Without being primed, they simply weren't noticing, and consequently the color of people's T-shirts was not entering their conscious level of experience.

Attention to one element in the environment not only activates brain processing of that element, but it also inhibits processing of competing elements by shutting down competing neural networks³⁰⁻³². Not only will someone looking for red T-shirts see more people wearing red T-shirts; he or she will give less attention to what other people (without red T-shirts) are wearing. Attention actually determines the activity of the brain¹⁰. If we don't give attention to something, even if it is present in our

environment, it doesn't activate much brain functioning and we don't have much, if any, experience of it. Thus, "*we are not passive recipients . . . but active participants in our own process of perception*"³³. Therefore, how we use or direct our attention and spend our thought is critical to our actual experience of any given situation.

EXAMPLE: Karen was a retired schoolteacher who had encountered a number of difficult circumstances over the past few years. She and her husband had divorced, and her adult son had developed a serious drug addiction and lost his job as a result. She had spent the last three years getting into bitter arguments with her son when he asked her for money, while at the same time feeling overwhelmed with guilt as she watched him bounce in and out of rehab. Recently, her health had begun to deteriorate and she had developed symptoms of chronic fatigue and fibromyalgia. When Karen first came to treatment, she was spending almost all day every day ruminating on the troubles in her life, wondering where she had gone wrong. Her view of the world was quite bleak; if she wasn't discussing her own problems, she would often describe negative things she had seen on the news or relate bad things happening to people she knew. Because Karen had a number of very real difficult situations in her life, it was hard for her to buy into the idea that she was participating in the experience she was having because of where she was focusing her attention. So we started small. Karen's first assignment was to wake up every morning and count as many people smiling as she could in a day. She kept track in a little notebook. After three weeks, Karen came in to a session beaming. Not only had the number of people she noticed smiling increased steadily, but she had started to take notice of what all these people were smiling about. She told several very funny stories, then mentioned that she had shared them with others during the week and had good laughs with some of her friends. She said she had never noticed how many happy people were around her and how many things there were to smile about. Nothing in Karen's life had changed—she still had the same problems—but because she was giving less attention to them and was intentionally focusing on looking for something more pleasant in her life, she was seeing an improvement in her emotional experience. This improvement led her to feel more optimistic that therapy could work for her, and she began to tackle the lessons with enthusiasm and dedication. Karen had to do a lot of hard work to find solutions to improve some of the situations in her life; however, her willingness led to action, which raised Karen's sense of well-being and the quality of her life.

LETTER TO PROFESSIONALS



Dear Clinical Professional,

Thank you for your interest in Future Directed Therapy. FDT was developed over a five year period of intensive workshops with real patients seeking treatment in the Adult Outpatient Program of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neurosciences at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, California. The patients who participated in the Future Directed Therapy courses graciously provided their feedback on all aspects of the material in the book and the final result could not have been achieved without their help. There are currently two published studies that have examined the effectiveness of FDT and both show that when the treatment is facilitated by a trained mental health professional the patients who participated, overall, experienced a significant reduction in symptoms of anxiety and depression as well as reported improvements in their quality of life. Please see the research page at www.futuredirectedtherapy.com to review copies of the research articles. We continue to conduct on-going research and welcome the interest of any professional who would like to collaborate in conducting research using Future Directed Therapy.

While *Think Forward to Thrive* is the product of the manual used by patients who have participated in the research studies it is important to note that this is *not* the clinician manual for Future Directed Therapy and we would not expect that clinicians would be able to provide the treatment without the extensive training on conceptual information that the professionals who participated in the studies received. The skills in *Think Forward to Thrive* may be of benefit as adjunctive tools to other forms of psychotherapeutic treatment but any professional using this book without training in FDT should not refer to the sole use of the book as treatment with Future Directed Therapy. The clinician manual and training tools for professionals are currently in development. Please check the website www.futuredirectedtherapy.com for more details.

Again thank you for your interest in *Think Forward to Thrive*, I hope this book is of help to you and your clients.

Sincerely,
Jennice Vilhauer, PhD