

# EFS SERVANT LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

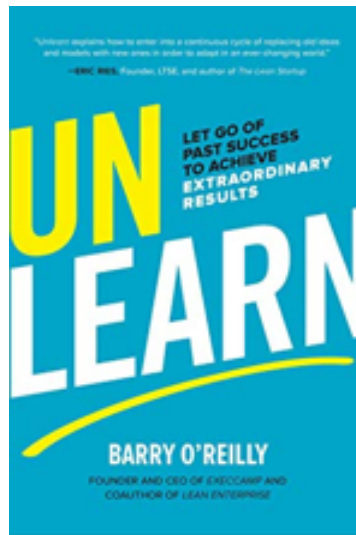
“Our life is what our thoughts make it.” Marcus Aurelius

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## UNLEARN

Let Go of Past Success to Achieve Extraordinary Results  
By: Barry O'Reilly



### Why Unlearn?

There comes a time in the life of every individual when doing the things that brought you success in the past no longer delivers the same results. You wake up, walk into your office and sit at your desk just as you always have. But suddenly you're struck, stagnating, unsatisfied or struggling with what was once your secret to success.

*This is the paradox of success.* While thinking and doing certain methods may have brought you success in the past, it's almost certain they won't continue to bring you success in the future.

Disruption does not actually apply to organizations. The truth is it applies to *individuals*. Exceptional leaders have discovered it's not how smart they are, how much they know, how long they've

been in an industry or what they have learned. It's the ability to recognize when to unlearn and when to let go of past success and their outdated thinking and behaviors, and innovate new mindsets and methods to achieve extraordinary results.

In times past, an individual's knowledge would last a life-time. Indeed, knowledge would be passed down for many generations and still be highly useful. Yet, as the pace of innovation increases, once-useful knowledge now becomes rapidly obsolete.

The answer is not only to learn. We struggle even more to know what to let go of, move away from and *unlearn*.

*Unlearning* is the process of letting go of, moving away from and reframing once-useful mindsets and acquired behaviors that were effective in the past but now limit our success. It's not forgetting or discarding knowledge or experience; it's the conscious act of letting go of outdated information and actively gathering and taking in new information to inform effective decision making and action.

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Consider what great leaders and the great companies they lead have in common. They have cultivated a capability within themselves to innovate, adapt and anticipate the future. They invest in experiences that enable them to grow; they seek situations that are uncomfortable, uncertain and the results unknown. They create mechanisms to experiment quickly and safely gather new information to evolve into something better.

They succeed over the long term by not holding on to what once brought them success. How they succeed isn't magical; it's methodical. It's not down to serendipity or luck — they have intentional systems.

#### **How to Unlearn**

Accordingly, unlearning isn't a one-and-done event — it's a *system*: a system of letting go and adapting to the situational reality of the present as we look to the future. It's recognizing that whatever it is that we have previously done may no longer be useful at this moment. Your mission is to develop the capability to know when to move away from outdated information, take in new information to inform your thinking, and adapt your behaviors as a result.

#### **The Cycle of Unlearning**

The system of unlearning is based on a **three-step approach to individual and collective growth called the Cycle of Unlearning**. Adopting the Cycle of Unlearning doesn't rely on being smart, or lucky, or desperate or all of the above. It relies only on you — your courage and commitment to use it intentionally in your work and your life to achieve extraordinary results.

**Step one: Unlearn.** Unlearning does not lead with words; it leads with action. You can't just say, "Yeah, of course I want to unlearn." You must first embrace your purpose by clarifying your why and your what. Why exactly do you want to unlearn? What specifically do you want to unlearn?

**Do you believe this is important?** Are you open to it? Are you curious? Do you agree there could be a better answer other than your own, an alternative way to achieve better results? When you can answer "yes" to these questions, then it's time to focus on the specifics of what you want to unlearn.

**Step two: Relearn.** There are immense challenges to relearning effectively, and we create many of these challenges ourselves. First, you must be willing to adapt and be open to information that goes against your inherent beliefs — that may be at odds with what you have always been told or taught to do. Second, you may need to learn how to learn again. Finally, you must create an environment for relearning to happen in a meaningful, yet often challenging, space outside your comfort zone.

**Step three: Breakthrough.** Once you learn how to relearn and open yourself up to new information flows, networks and systems from every possible source, you are poised to develop the kind of breakthrough thinking that has the potential to vault you into the lead. **Breakthrough is the result of unlearning and then relearning** — it's the new information and insights that come out of the first two steps of the Cycle of Unlearning. The information and insights are extremely powerful because they inform and guide your behaviors, perspective and mindset.



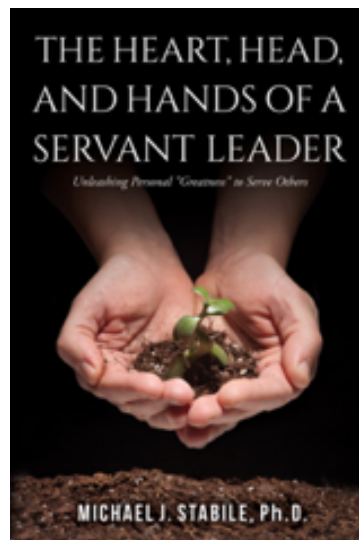
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# RETRAIN YOUR THINKING PATTERNS

**By: Michael J. Stabile**

*“A lifetime of habits ingrained by repetition can seemingly make us slaves to a not always beneficial master—our own brain.”*

—Jeffery Schwartz and Rebecca Gladding  
*You Are Not Your Brain*



Do you feel like you are stuck in “Groundhog Day”? The 1993 movie *Groundhog Day*, starring Bill Murray, portrayed a man stuck in the same day over and over. Nothing changes as much as he wants it to, and everything is very predictable. Many of us are like this character; we want to change our lifestyles, our mind-sets, and our habits, but we, too, are stuck in the trap of “Groundhog Day.”

Left to its own devices, your mind can cause you to believe things that are not true and to act in any number of self-destructive ways. As we have seen in the previous chapter, when we believe toxic and deceptive brain messages, we go to places—mentally and emotionally—where we don’t want to be and find ourselves acting in ways that aren’t congruent with our hearts or doing things we really don’t want to do.

**Toxic thinking is deceptive, and we may believe and act in a number of ways:**

- *Over thinking problems and fretting over things that are out of our control*
- *Getting stuck or panicked by unfounded fears and worries*
- *Blaming and chastising ourselves for things that are not our fault*
- *Engaging in unhealthy behaviors to escape life’s daily stresses*
- *Reverting to past patterns when trying to make a change*

**Does any of this sound familiar to you?** The more often you act in unhealthy ways of thinking, the more you teach your brain that what is simply a habit (a learned behavior) is essential to your survival. Your brain does not distinguish between whether the action is beneficial or destructive; it just responds to how you behave and then generates strong impulses, thoughts, desires, cravings, and urges that compel you to perpetuate your habit, whatever it may be. Unfortunately, more often than not, these behaviors and patterns are not the ones that improve your life.

The good news is that you can overcome the brain’s controls and rewire



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your brain to work for you by learning to renew your mind and thinking, debunking the myths and lies it has been so successfully selling you, and choosing to act in healthy ways.

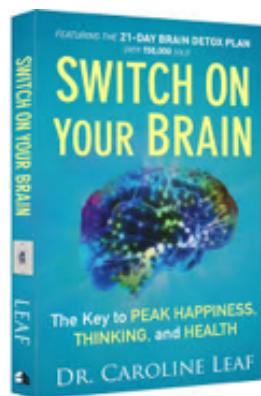
**Habits (good and bad) are what we create when we do something over and over, to the point where we no longer need to think about it consciously in order to repeat the process perfectly.** This applies not only to things we do physically but also to our thoughts. When we think the same thing over and over, it becomes a habit of thought. A habit of thought over time becomes an attitude or belief. There is nothing as powerful as attitude. Attitudes dictate our responses to the present and determine the quality of our future. **Attitude can simply be defined as our mind-set or mental conditioning that determines our interpretation of and response to our environment.** It is our way of thinking. Attitude is a natural product of the integration of self-worth, self-concept, self-esteem, and sense of value or significance. In essence, attitude is the manifestation of who we think we are. We live our lives based on who we think we are.

**The 4R Model Approach** gives you a framework for understanding the process of how habits are formed and developed, and you can then learn how to focus your attention in beneficial ways so that you can retrain and renew your mind, habits, and thinking. **Let's look at an overview of the four steps.**

The first step is **Rewire—identifying** the thought, habit, emotion, or behavior through focused, reflective attention. The next step is **Reset—recognizing** that no thought or habit is harmless. You must choose to change and inhibit the negative thoughts, realizing the intensity and/ or interference of negative thinking on new thoughts or building positive habits. The third step is **Refocus—focusing** attention on the “new” desired thought, habit, emotion, or behavior, which builds positive memory that is embedded into your daily routines. The fourth step is **Renew—the process** of new habit development is based on developing the “strength of memory” over time; **new thinking patterns over time = transformation.**

## YOU HAVE CONTROL OVER YOUR BRAIN FITNESS

By: Dr. Caroline Leaf



Brain scientists in recent years have discovered how the state of our mind – what the brain does – influences our overall mental and physical health. It's wonderful news that our intellectual limits are NOT “set” or “fixed” in childhood only to then decline from the age of 25! This bleak and incorrect view of the human brain has, thank goodness, been overturned by the astounding new research that the brain grows and changes no matter what your age; it all depends on how you USE your brain.

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When you adopt a lifestyle of intense mental focus, you quite literally “switch on” neuroplasticity, the marvelous ability of the brain the grow branches and unending scaffolds of networks to increase your intelligence. I have, in my own research, seen patients with severe trauma to the brain move to intellectual heights never dreamed of; students who thought they could not make it academically become master scholars; and people whose depression threatened to overthrow them set free.

Strategic approaches to thinking necessitate an understanding of your **PERFECTLY YOU**, how you think—which will create new neural pathways and strengthen existing ones for as long as you live! How you think and what you are thinking, which I call the “I-factor” (**the PERFECTLY YOU**), are being proven scientifically to have as much if not more influence over our genes than diet and exercise. This is an emerging new field called Epigenetics and means control over and above the genes. This is very exciting because it means we are not victims of our biology, as we have been erroneously told, but are “*captains of our souls*” (from the poem ‘Invictus’).

What we think influences every aspect of who we are and how we feel physically. A fascinating study, one of many of this kind, done at Ohio State University shows that healing can be slowed by as much as 40% when one is stressed. Considering that stress is the body’s reaction to our thought life, our state of mind (our thought life), is quite literally determining our mental and physical health.

It is your I-factor your **PERFECTLY YOU** - wired for health, your thoughts which encompass your beliefs and your feelings, which are able to create a virtuous cycle of health or a toxic cycle of sickness and unhappiness. It does not matter how sick or mentally challenged we may feel, we still have the ability to choose our thoughts and feelings. God has equipped each of us with all the genetic material and epigenetic ability to deal optimally with all the challenges of life.

**It all boils down to your PERFECTLY YOU, in other words it’s up to us to follow the words of scripture ” Every day I lay before you life and death; choose life so that you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19).**