**Pause**

Everything you do, you *choose* to do albeit often subconsciously. You choose to get up in the morning; you *choose* whether to eat breakfast or not (and whether to have cereal or toast); you *choose* whether to smile at people or not; you *choose* whether to drive to work or walk. Hence, it follows that you can *choose* whether to respond positively or negatively to any situation.

 By *pausing* before reacting; you can gain far more control over your thoughts and consequently your response the situation. So the first step into changing negative thought patterns into positive ones is to *pause.* Resist the urge to react immediately. If you are a habitual negative thinker, any immediate reaction to a situation is likely to be negative. If it helps, count to ten. By doing this, you avoid making a knee-jerk reaction which you might later regret. A pause also allows you time to consider your choices and weigh up the pros and cons of you proposed reaction.

**Choose**

During the pause – which can be as long as you feel is necessary to clarify your thinking – direct your mind towards the positive response. If applicable, consciously stop yourself from thinking negative thoughts. However strange and uncomfortable it might feel at first, make yourself choose the positive reaction over the negative reaction. Whenever faced with a choice you may find it helps to think about how you would want others to treat you in such a situation. We have found that it makes life far less complicate if you follow this simple rule.

**Action**

Once you have chosen the positive response, *act on it,* otherwise this can become the point at which the thinking becomes ‘ineffective’. Do whatever is necessary to turn that thought into words or deeds. Have faith in your choice. Do not be tempted to back down or moderate it.