

# Reflection on the past year

Posted on



Our thoughts are nothing but brain...

The year is nearly coming to an end. Another year is dawning. What should we reflect on regarding life in the last year? Is reflecting a sign of a good attitude or a bad attitude? If we reflect on the past unnecessarily, it can be detrimental, but it is important for certain perspectives. For instance, if you consistently label an event as a disaster, you may develop a mental health issue such as trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). As a student, you have many things to keep in mind and need to remind yourself constantly otherwise, they will be forgotten.

As a business person, teacher, or preacher, you must maintain various records to effectively fulfill your role and remind yourself to update them regularly. It means that every individual has different things to keep in mind and reminders to maintain their lives. As a result, we are all constantly thinking about something, reminding ourselves, or sometimes ruminating on something positively or negatively.

Accordingly, negative thinking can lead to mental issues and decline, while positive thinking fosters mental balance and personal growth. But reality is, overthinking even positive thoughts can lead to mental disorders, while negative thinking is often detrimental to development.

Are we really thinking and forming thoughts, or are they something that simply come to mind automatically? To discover the truth, we must search for it scientifically, free from any prejudice and mythological beliefs. To achieve this, you must be a liberated and intelligent individual, free from the constraints of past events. Then, you can clearly understand that the brain continuously generates these thoughts about the past through its brain chemicals and neurons.

It is said in science, “Brain chemicals, called neurotransmitters, help create thoughts by enabling neurons to communicate with each other. When you have a

thought, neurons fire electrical signals that convert to chemical signals, and neurotransmitters carry these signals across gaps between neurons to transmit the message. This process forms a complex pattern of neural activity that constitutes a thought.” (Searching the internet: How the brain chemical makes thoughts? AI Overview.) After that, they explain how the process works.

Neuroscientists say neurons are firing. “A thought begins with electrical impulses from your neurons, which transmit messages back and forth throughout the brain. At the end of a neuron, this electrical signal triggers the release of chemical messengers called neurotransmitters from vesicles.

The neurotransmitters then travel across the gap and bind to specific receptors on the next neuron, like a key fitting a lock. This binding triggers a response in the next neuron, either exciting it or inhibiting it, which continues the electrical and chemical signaling chain and helps form the complex pattern of activity that results in a thought.” Some scientists say this brain chemical process works like a ‘wiring and firing’ process.

Our thoughts are simply the result of chemical processes in the brain?” While we understand the scientific creation of the mind, it is also essential to explore the mind psychologically for a deeper understanding.



Brain neurons.

According to this scientific explanation, are our thoughts merely brain chemicals and neuron patterns? Our thoughts are created by brain chemicals without our intervention. That’s why some psychologists argue that every thought is a concept in this world, not a real thing. Therefore, we can realize that everything in this world is created by the human brain, not by an outside force.

According to scientific theory, you are not the person who has to respond to your thoughts or any problem that you’ve created. Many individuals unknowingly create

problems for themselves and society, when they are unaware of how their mind creates everything scientifically. Can we conclude by saying, "Our thoughts are simply the result of chemical processes in the brain?" While we understand the scientific creation of the mind, it is also essential to explore the mind psychologically for a deeper understanding.

Western psychology is believed to have originated after the development of Western Philosophy during the Socratic era in Greece (470-399 BCE). It is said that he was the first to investigate the mind, which is the invisible sense organ in the human body. Unfortunately, he could not have completely experimented due to opposition, which accused him of misleading the youngsters.

However, he taught his philosophy to his followers, including Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Antisthenes, and others, just before his execution. Among them, Aristotle was one of the greatest intellectual figures of Classical antiquity and Western history.

He was mentioned as the author of a philosophical and scientific system, and Aristotelian concepts remained embedded in Western thinking, even after the intellectual revolution of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment. According to his intellect, he has covered most of the sciences and many of the arts, including biology, botany, philosophy of mind, psychology, and zoology. So, it will not be a misleading to say that he was one of the beginners of Western psychology.

After a few decades, William James (1890) describes thoughts as something that "goes on." Furthermore, it is stated in 'The Principles of Psychology' - Internet Encyclopedia of Psychology, "The first fact is that thinking of some sort goes on. If we could say in English 'it thinks,' as we say, 'it rains' or it blows, ... we must simply say that thought goes on." He has explained again, "How does it go on?" For this, he has pointed out 'Five Characters.' "

Every thought tends to be part of a personal consciousness.  
2. Within each personal consciousness, thought is always changing.  
3. Within each personal consciousness, thought is sensibly continuous.  
4. It always appears to deal with objects independent of itself.  
5. It is interested in some parts of these objects to the exclusion of others, and welcomes or rejects them." (Internet Encyclopedia of Psychology).

According to William James's experiment, the mind is transparent, allowing someone to understand it easily. Many individuals struggle to understand the concept of 'MIND' due to their reliance on myths, which lead to various mental disorders or problems and ultimately, mental illness. When they constantly reflect on the past, they can become victims of trauma, known as post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

Therefore, first, you must realize that our thoughts are simply a result of electrochemical processes in the brain, and secondly, you must examine the relevant incident and reject unnecessary thoughts that arise in your mind by saying, 'This is not my creation.' But there is an expression, "easier said than done." Therefore, there are five other ways to practice if you get an inevitable thought. The first one is, if you get any unnecessary thought, let go of it and focus on something more positive. If it doesn't work out, try the second option – check the errors in it directly. The third one is 'disregard', which would be very difficult. The fourth one is to 'examine its route'. The final option is to 'keep quiet by clenching your teeth.' If the fifth wicket falls, make sure to find a mentor as your resort.

*Ven Diyapattugama Revatha Thero (B.A., M.A., M.Phil.)  
Expert Psychological Counselor and Meditation Instructor Siriwardhanarama Buddha Dhamma College  
Mano^daya Meditation Center Siriwardhanaramaya, Temple Lane, Kollupitiya  
sirirevathad@gmail.com dhammadavedi.com*

 Ven Diyapattugama Revatha Thero, Chief Incumbent of the Siriwardhanaramaya Temple, Kollupitiya.

Reflection on the past year