

# 10 Confessions Of A Deep Thinker

[BY KERI MANGIS](#)

Ever since I can remember, I've loved to think.

As a child, when all the other kids went outside to play in sandboxes or on swing sets, I wanted to stay inside – I don't mean inside the house, necessarily, but inside my mind. My mind was my sanctuary, my refuge, my blank canvas where I could create and recreate the world at will.

As I grew older, my love of thinking led me into math classes, and especially, in college, to calculus, where deliberating on one single problem for an hour or more exhilarated me. I also enjoyed English classes. My shy, introverted self actively participated in the discussions that ensued after we finished an assigned novel.

**Confession #1:** Growing up, I experienced few disadvantages to having a thinker's mind, so I wasn't prepared to learn that there was a downside to my nature. This changed quickly when, newly situated in the corporate world, my boss's boss called me into his office saying that he'd heard I had "shared some ideas." Indeed I had, in a recent meeting of co-workers about the rollout of a new project.

In his office, an older, greying gentleman encouraged me, a 23-year-old ambitious woman, to share my thoughts.

"On what?" I'd asked.

"On anything you'd like," he'd responded.

Filled with pride for the attention, I shared my thoughts on how we could make our processes better, faster, more reliable, while also imagining him promoting me based solely on my

creativity and drive.

Later, though, my coworkers told me that he thought me arrogant and out of line. They advised I keep a low profile. I felt a deep shame come over me. I didn't understand back then that many corporations don't want their entry-level people thinking, they want them doing.

Paralysis froze my thought and idea-generating processes for a long time, before thawing into a low-grade tentativeness and a honed ability to self-censure. I also cultivated the skill of watching body language and picking up on subtle signs for when people didn't want to hear any more ideas – adding yet another layer of thinking onto my thinking. Now, I wasn't just thinking about ideas, I was thinking about how the other person(s) was receiving the idea, and whether or not they thought I was crazy.

***It took me a few years to regain my footing and begin to express my ideas out loud again. But it wasn't until I discovered yoga – not the poses, though they fascinated me too, but the philosophy of yoga – that I truly found myself and my curiosity again.***

Here, I discovered a world of thoughts to think, and people to think them with. There was an entire yogic cosmology to explore, the language of Sanskrit to study and learn, gods and goddesses' stories to ruminate on, four very different paths of yoga to explore.

**Confession #2:** Whenever I find a yoga teacher, book, or philosophy that stimulates and engages my mind, I sigh as a good feeling rushes into my brain. It's like that satisfaction

after the first sip of good wine or, though I'm not a smoker, what I imagine would be the feeling of the first drag on a cigarette after a long day.

**Confession #3:** Yes, it's like that. I'm not exaggerating. Getting the satisfying feeling I crave from thinking ideas is like an itch getting scratched, a burn being soothed, an addiction being fed.

**Confession #4:** At face value, you might think that this is an addiction I could satiate all by myself. After all, thinking is a solo activity. But it isn't satisfying enough for me to take in information. For me, I need to share my ideas with others, or I get what I call "mentally constipated." This leads only to a dark, lonely place I know as depression.

To keep depression at bay, every single day I need to collect new thoughts and ideas, organize them, process them, and then, hopefully, share them. Or, just as often, I need to share thoughts before I've even organized and processed them. I supposed this unfiltered sharing could be called brainstorming, but for me, it's not something I turn on for a 3:00 meeting. It's something I do naturally all the time.

**Confession #5:** I am often a person who inspires others to think about things differently. But I am just as often a person who fatigues and overwhelms other people. Knowing this truth about myself is helpful, but it hurts, too. I sometimes wish my presence comforted people more often than it discomfited them, or, at least, that being a comforting, easy presence didn't require me to dial back or hide truer aspects of myself.

Today, I can actually feel the moment when listeners start tuning out. My husband used to notify me this was happening to him by saying he was "getting full." Even with casual encounters, though, I can sense when my time is running out – it's like an hourglass turning over, or a door slowly closing.

Sometimes, like sticking a foot in the door, I cram in a whole bunch of last-second thoughts. Other times, I feel the closed door like a slap in the face and walk away, ashamed at my inability to keep my ideas to myself. Most of the time, obligingly, I get the hint, and return to the more acceptable, gossipy, "Did you hears?" of our conversational routines.

"Begin with the weather," my husband once advised, after a particularly painful social encounter.

"But I don't care about the weather," I argued back. And I didn't. I don't.

***I rarely want to talk about surface things like sports, or pop culture, or the weather, when we can talk about climate change, and social justice, and healthcare. Why talk about the day-to-day responsibilities of your job, unless we're talking about it in context of whether or not these responsibilities satisfy your soul purpose?***

"Because," I can hear my husband retort. "That's just what people do. Start at the beginning, and work your way in."

**Confession #6:** I can do small talk now. I wish I didn't have to. Small talk for me is like hair in a drain; it just clogs everything up. Perhaps this is why I don't often recall the details of our small talk – where you work, how many kids you have, (names of your children are even harder to recall), where you live...none of these details stick. It's not that I don't care, it's that to me, these details aren't the "sticky" things about you. They don't define you, not in my mind. They

aren't who you are, deep inside, which is the person I want to know.

What I will remember about our conversations is how you feel about your work and whether your lifestyle satisfies you. I will remember what you said about how being a parent has shaped your outlook on the world. I will definitely remember whether you live close enough for us to see each other regularly.

**Confession #7:** If we're having a conversation and sharing ideas, I will come across as enthused and animated – lots of facial expressions, changes in tone, hand and arm gestures. Know that my excitement doesn't mean I have to or will act on every idea, let alone any of them. If, for instance, I suggest we travel together for a weekend to Iceland, it doesn't mean I'm going home and buying plane tickets. My idea generator is impulsive; my actions are not. So relax, I'm not holding you to your ideas either.

**Confession #8:** If an idea does get through the initial stages and needs to be made manifest, I'd rather hand it over to someone else to do, while I go back to the drawing board. I love the drawing board. It's like the canvas inside my mind I played in as a child, where I could create and recreate as well.

**Confession #9:** I wish I could just start talking to people, even strangers, about the things that matter deeply to them. I want to break the surface and fast, like jumping off the relationship high dive. I want to hear and exchange possibilities for our world, things that are small and doable, as well as things that would require alien intervention to accomplish. I honestly don't see the difference.

**Confession #10:** Though I've learned how to self-censure, moderate, and watch for body language cues, there's nothing finer than when I meet a fellow deep-thinker. Someone with

whom I can share ideas, and we both know we're just playing with the creative atoms of the universe. "What ifs?" are our building blocks. "But it could happen," we say to each other and grin when we've finished. "Anything is possible," we remind each other. The hours pass in blissful symbiosis.

Hey, I have an idea! What if everyone, not just children but adults, too, could share and listen to crazy ideas – ideas about anything at all. What if there were no criteria to meet in order to offer an idea about something; you wouldn't have to be an expert in the topic, you wouldn't even have to come prepared with researched facts. I wonder what change would be possible in our families, our workplaces, our culture, if we allowed people space to think and create without judgment or expectation.

The trained-up, tentative cynic in me worries that we can't move to this kind of freedom with our thinking. We grown-ass people are all about settling down and settling in, not shaking our very foundation. I worry that too many of us have long ago lost our childlike wonder about the world. We don't have time for "brainstorming" unless it's scheduled and results-oriented. The cynic has a point: none of us have been raised that thinking-for-thinking-sake can possibly benefit our culture.

But the deep thinker in me reminds, "It's just an idea. It could happen. You see, anything is possible."

Photo by [Issara Willenskomer](#) on [Unsplash](#)

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [I Wrote This For You](#) .

***Sip a little more:***

*5 Reasons To Be Radically Creative In A World  
That Wants Us To Be Normal*

*Dear Daughter: Be The Keeper Of Your Own  
Creative Fire*

*Freeing Our Untapped Souls To Live Our Divine  
Inspiration*

Every human is an artist.  
The dream of your life is to make  
beautiful art.

Don Miguel Ruiz

THEURBANHOWL.COM



# #ANYTHINGISPOSSIBLE

HOWL WITH US  
ON [FACEBOOK](#), [INSTAGRAM](#), [TWITTER](#) & [PINTEREST](#).

HELP SPREAD THE MAGIC: