

HeadTrash... The Leading Killer of Potential

By Renie Cavallari

We all have it. Only you can cure it. HeadTrash is that nasty voice in your head. This negative self-talk limits your thinking, can keep you up all night, and sucks your energy.

Some of us are real trash collectors. We carry it around all day, every day. Trash collecting is self-inflicted though sometimes those around us “*help*” pile it on. HeadTrash is never helpful in any form.

After decades of practical application research, high-performance modeling, and working hands-on with thousands of organizations to help them unleash the full potential of their employees and their performance, [RCI Institute](#), the research and active think tank arm of [Aspire](#), has found a clear correlation between how we think, our performance potential, and how happy we are. In addition, through our shared 25 plus years of performance coaching of thousands of people at all levels of organizations, we have definitively identified that HeadTrash hijacks potential more than any other factor. **It is by far the leading killer of potential, and worse yet, it kills our joy.**

Changing negative thoughts, aka HeadTrash, can be difficult. Yet, mindset is a great predictor of both performance and the quality of your life as it determines how you feel, how you think, and most importantly, how you act, work, and even play. The more HeadTrash, the less joy, so learning how to manage and dump your trash is at the heart of enjoying life’s journey.

The Little People

It’s all about those darn little people in your brain. You know them. Where you have healthy self-talk, you have healthy thoughts, and therefore you feel good. The opposite is true with negative self-talk, which limits your personal power.

The power of your self-talk sets up how you take on the challenges of your day and, ultimately, how you feel about your life and see the world. Self-talk impacts your state of mind, perspectives, and engagement.

The RCI Institute’s research concluded that high performers have three critical and consistent areas that allow them to be highly competent:

1. A positive, determined, and curious mindset
2. Strong skills they are always working to improve
3. Clarity of the processes they use to achieve, and the openness to constantly improve them

How you speak to yourself is at the root of your mindset. When you have positive thoughts and empowering beliefs, you will naturally move at a more powerful and productive velocity than if your efforts are fueled by negativity.

“Nothing positive comes from negativity!”

As only you control your thoughts, only you control your mindset. It is just that simple. If you don't like what is happening in your life, check in on your mindset. Are your thoughts serving or depleting you? Your thoughts drive your behaviors and actions. When you focus on the problem, you stay in it.

Dumping your HeadTrash lets go of your fears, worry, self-doubt, or disappointments that hold you back from progress. When you learn to dump your HeadTrash, your emotional brain moves into a turbo-charged solution machine that is now capable of considering all that is possible. Now you are ready for productive action.

Case & Point

I really don't like working out. Actually, I hate it. Going to the gym does nothing for me. So, when I say on December 31st (almost every year) that I am going to start going to the gym *again* and get back in shape, the odds are very high (and there is a lot of proof that supports these odds) that I will go for a little while and then I will make excuses or find other priorities to get out of going to the gym. It isn't that I don't know how to use the equipment (skills), or have a workout regimen (process), or hire a trainer to hold me accountable.

The reason I don't go is simple. My self-talk says things like, “I don't have time, or I hate sweating, or it's boring.” The fact is my head isn't in the game (mindset). This is why so many of us start strong in January with our endless lists of “New Year's resolutions” and forget what they were by February!

Just saying, “I hate working out,” puts me in the wrong mindset. I have already made it a chore versus something fun, and that doesn't motivate anyone. If I take the time to explore why I truly want to get in shape, replace thoughts and beliefs that don't serve me, and determine the ways I like to exercise, the odds are my HeadTrash will shift to something more productive and inspiring. It's how I look at working out that is the problem, and that is my HeadTrash (self-talk and mindset).

I remember when my father had a heart attack due to smoking cigarettes. He had tried to quit for years, and in the moment where he thought he was going to die and miss out on the years ahead with his family, he found the mindset he needed... “I want to live!” He never smoked again.

During these extremely challenging times, I hear so many people say that it is impossible to do (blank). You fill in the blank. Yet, people are figuring out how to do so many things. I know many people who lost their jobs, through no fault of their own. Some have gone out and found new jobs that they love even more, while others are stuck in the blame and shame mode of “this shouldn't have happened to me.” These little people in their brains are slowing them up, wasting their energy, and limiting the endless possibilities ahead of them.

This is the power of our minds, and when we clear them of the HeadTrash that is holding us back, we can soar to our potential. You want voices in your head that work *for* you rather than against you. Voices that are your ally and support your life's agenda. Voices that provide reason and guidance. Voice that are objective and non-judgmental, and voices that are in touch with your true desires and struggle. These thoughts don't regret or resent your past but rather embrace the lessons that have come from it. Where HeadTrash is a drain, your positive perspectives are a faucet. Turn that baby on!

Where does HeadTrash come from?

HeadTrash is collected through life's encounters. It can build over the years or happen in an instant. It is influenced by your experiences, values, relationships, friendships, workplace, social, and mass media communication, and in general, life's endless events. These events create beliefs that leave imprints you pick up along life's journey. Some are positive and abundant, while others are negative and limiting.

It isn't life's events that determine your HeadTrash. It is how you interpret those events. The meaning you give them is the imprint you come to believe. This is why two people can experience the same thing at the same time and have two totally different experiences or beliefs about it.

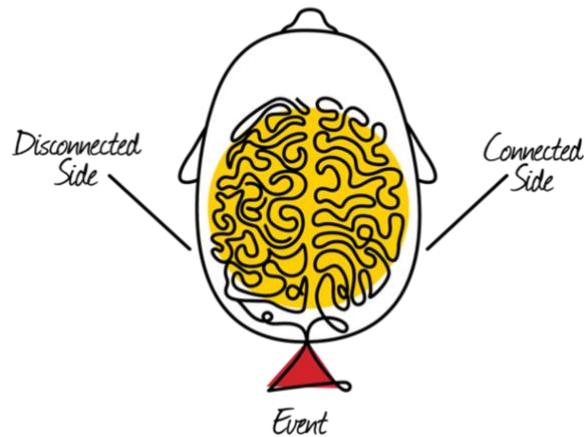
In life, things happen, and it is how you chose to experience and interpret these "things" that determines your viewfinder (perspectives, beliefs, and imprints) and, ultimately, defines how you feel about your life.

Where does HeadTrash live?

You have a physical brain and an emotional brain. In its simplest definition, your physical brain operates through oxygen, nutrients, and blood. Your emotional brain has a different operating system, and that is your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. Your HeadTrash lives in your emotional brain.

There are two sides to the emotional brain: the connected side and the disconnected side.

Emotional Brain



The connected side is where our best selves live. It is where rational thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, laughter, fun, self-confidence, and positivity reside and prosper. The disconnected side of our emotional brain is where our ego and worse selves have set up camp. Negative emotions, fear, anger, disappointment, annoyance, and generally our least effective decisions run this side of your emotional brain.

When life happens, it is your thoughts that determine which side of the brain you will move from. It seems simple, and yet the emotional brain is complex.

HeadTrash & Leadership

Though this has always been true, 2020 set off a pandemic far beyond COVID-19. We are in the throes of a HeadTrash pandemic, and its impact has stolen the joy from many of our lives. As COVID took away our natural human desire for control and connection, it has caused tremendous loneliness, economic stress, and overwhelming chaos. The imprints on our lives, in many ways, have been established, some positive, some debilitating, and some in between.

For leaders, HeadTrash has never been more challenging to navigate. As humans, we have our own HeadTrash. As leaders, we have to understand and manage the reality that everyone around us, from our co-workers and bosses, to our partners and families, are all experiencing some form of HeadTrash.

The impact is significant as HeadTrash tends to limit our clarity and this lack of focus decreases productivity while increasing errors, triggering defensiveness, and sucking energy, ultimately impacting performance and profitability. It's a big problem.

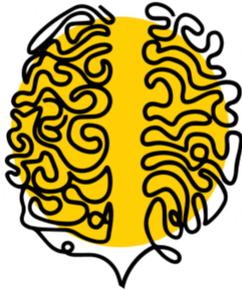
The single greatest predictor of human performance and potential is our mindset. HeadTrash undermines us and steals our brilliance. It is an ever-repeating tape running in our head that is

just a lie. Everything you need is within you. Learning how to master the little taunting voices in your mind will strengthen your personal power, get you to play big, and allow you to soar.

About the Book *HeadTrash*

HEADTRASH

THE LEADING KILLER OF HUMAN POTENTIAL



RENIE CAVALLARI
FOUNDER OF RCI INSTITUTE

Successful people aren't necessarily smarter, happier, or more competent. They are simply better at taking out their trash. HeadTrash shapes our reality, sucks our energy, and shifts our focus from self-acceptance and inner peace to worry and fear. Change your HeadTrash, and you'll change your life.

In *HeadTrash*, author and the founder of Aspire and RCI Institute, Renie Cavallari teaches you how to stop questioning yourself and dump your HeadTrash for less anxiety, bigger potential, and a better quality of life. Filled with practical strategies and heartwarming true stories, this is your inspirational self-improvement guide to master the little taunting voices in your mind that doubt your goals, shames your leadership, and weakens your personal power.

For more information about *HeadTrash*, go to www.myheadtrash.com.

About the Author

Renie Cavallari is the founder, CEO, and Chief Instigator of Aspire, a global transformational training and culture development company specializing in inspired learning that shifts human behavior and awakens potential. She is also the founder of the RCI Institute, an active thinking and people technology lab. An award-winning international strategist, speaker, and leadership expert with an inimitable grasp of business and its challenges, she has driven measurable results for businesses with her innovative solutions around the world for over 30 years. To learn more about Aspire, go to www.poweredbyaspire.com.