

MONKEY MIND SYMPTOMS

EXPANDED

by Stephanie Moyer Seigh, ACE, PCC

“Monkey Mind is the inner dialogue...
the running commentary in our head, a little
voice that provides judgments and critiques
about our every action...”

The concept of Monkey Mind comes from
Buddhism, which describes it as a self-criticizing
aspect of our mind that swings us from
doubt, to worry, and back to doubt.
Monkey Mind chatters the most loudly when
we threaten to change the status quo –
even if the status quo is something
we long to leave behind.”

– Maria Nemeth, PhD in *The Energy of Money*



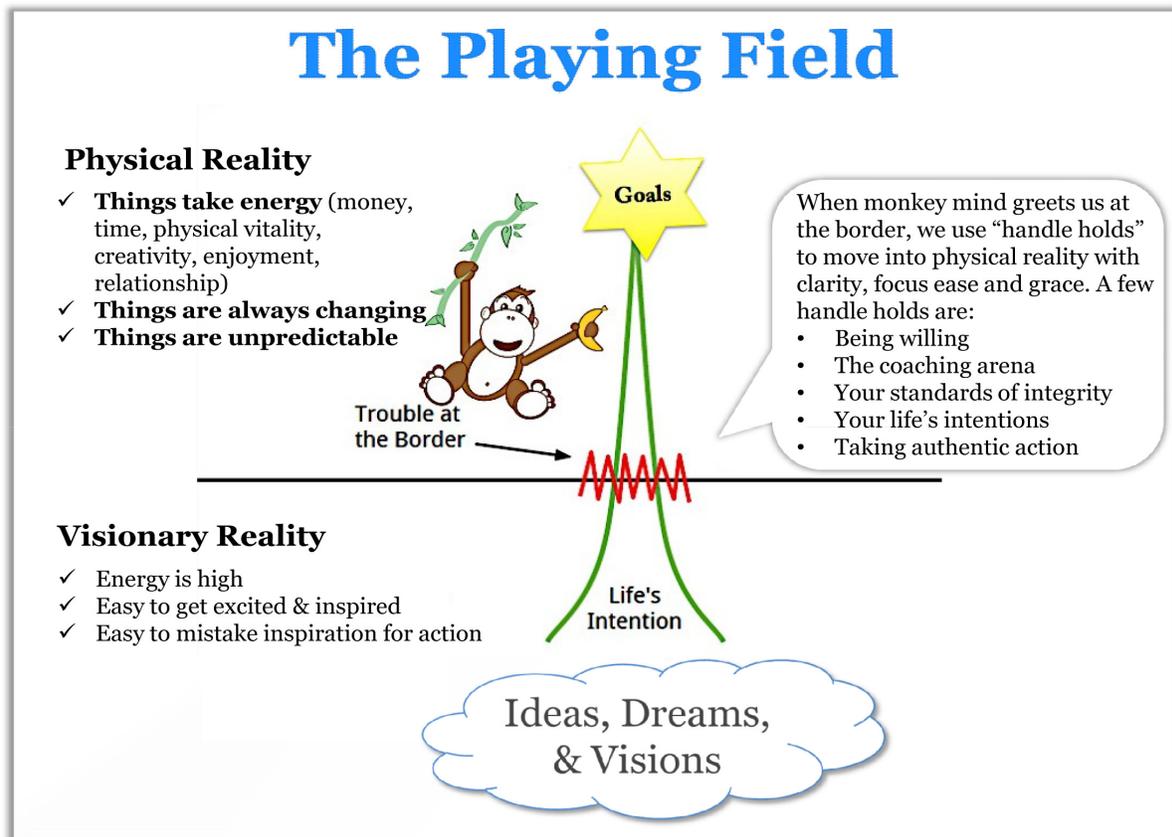
Monkey Mind starts to swing when we are up to something big, when we are focused on bringing a goal into physical reality, when we are demonstrating a heartfelt life's intention.

When seen in this way, we can shift our energy around monkey from something to bemoan, to something that can serve us. When we see monkey as the loyal opposition, as the opposing team, we start to see it as an opportunity to practice.

When we have a worthy opponent on the sports field, we are called to up our game. We get in better shape, we get support, we hire a masterful coach, we learn new tools and skills, and we practice, practice, practice.

In order to gain maximum benefit from Monkey Mind, we need to learn to identify it quickly. Maria observes, “It is easier to separate from Monkey Mind if you can look objectively at the guises it likes to wear.”

The following symptoms were discerned by Maria to help us to observe monkey as soon as it start to swing. Once we have developed that capacity, we are ready to reap the benefits, the opportunities, inherent in what those symptoms surface for us at the border.



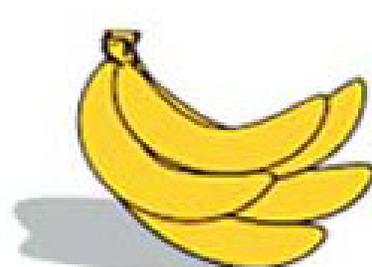
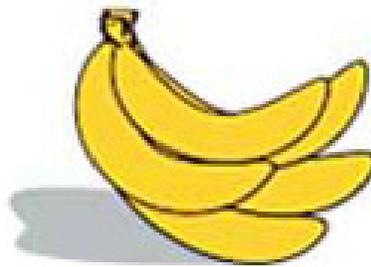
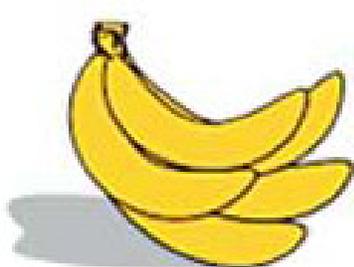
Remember, “Your Monkey Mind thoughts... having nothing to do with your true nature. It is only one aspect of your mind, and who you are is greater than anything it can throw at you.”

We are human beings with hero’s hearts and monkey minds, on an incredible journey.

When we become willing to see our Monkey Mind as that loyal opposition, as opposed to something that we need to defeat or eliminate, our journey becomes infinitely richer.

So far we’ve looked at...

1. Being vague
2. Scarcity thoughts
3. Talking of the past or future as if it is the present
4. Defensive
5. Taking things personally
6. Comparison

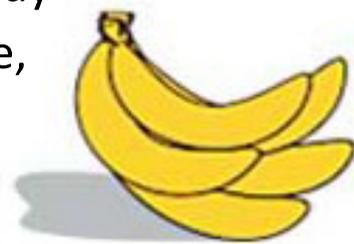


Today we're exploring...

7. Resignation: “Never mind, it doesn't matter... it's really not important. This is much harder than I thought it would be, and it won't make a difference anyway.” Oh monkey, how you mess with us on this one! How often do we surrender to the defeated energy of resignation, trying to convince ourselves that it really doesn't matter to us... when it really does.

Resignation is often tinged with sadness, despair, fatigue and/or lethargy. Resignation can make it hard to move in the direction of our goals and dreams. This is where the importance of small, sweet steps comes into play. The paralysis (feeling frozen) often caused by resignation can feel overwhelming, making any movement monumentally difficult.

Taking just one very small - teeny weeny - sweet step starts to thaw us at the border. It's also important (as it is with all the symptoms) to reach out for support when we realize that we are having a huge monkey mind fit. And as with the other symptoms that stop us at the border, keeping our Standards of Integrity and our Life's Intentions handy is helpful in reminding us who we are, and that our goals and dreams ARE important.



8. Being victim or martyr: When we're in victim and/or martyr energy, we believe that life is happening TO us, rather than BY us, or THROUGH us. We're looking for someone to blame, rather than taking responsibility for our decisions and actions. Remember the old Flip Wilson bit, "The devil made me do it!" The problem with not recognizing that we're accountable for those decisions is that we miss the chance to learn from our mistakes. As long as we're looking outside ourselves, for "who's the matter with us", we're not looking inside for the real growth opportunity.

Martyr has a similar, but subtly different, energy. When we're in martyr, we're playing the "I'll just do it myself" card... the "I shouldn't have to ask" card. Ironically, martyr is self-imposed victimhood. It's not someone outside of us that's victimizing us, it's actually us. We're deciding to be a victim by making up stories about how unappreciated we are, or how nobody understands us, or how the "system" is against us.

One of the definitions of martyr from Webster's Dictionary is: A person who pretends to suffer or who exaggerates suffering in order to get praise or sympathy. Is this really how we want to show up in life? Is this how a loving family member, or a financially successful person, or a respected professional, or an effective mentor or coach would show up?

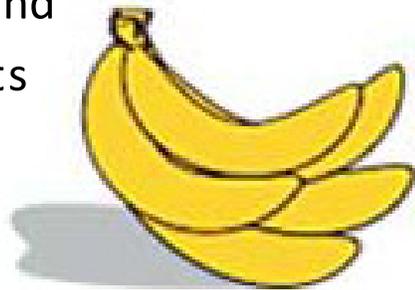
When we recognize that we're in victim or martyr mode, we get to ask ourselves, "What is this getting me? Is there another way to have that need met? How can I be clear and 'on my card' in this conversation and relationship?" This reflection shifts us from victim to victor, from martyr to master, from monkey mind to conscious conduit... a powerful shift indeed.

Any questions or comments so far?

What are you noticing?

Are any of these in your top three monkey mind symptoms?

9. Either/Or Thinking: Monkey really gets creative with this one. "Either I can save money OR I can pay off my debt. I can't possibly do both!" "Either I can get a good night's sleep OR I can exercise in the morning." Sound familiar? This symptom limits possibilities and stymies our creative process.



The shift here is to both/and thinking. In the presence of either/or, we ask ourselves: How? How can I do both? How can I contribute to my savings/retirement account AND pay off my unsecured credit card debt? How can I get a good night's sleep AND wake up in time to get in a productive workout? What plan can I come up with, what support am I willing to let in?

We can enroll a small, sweet step partner to set the arena with us every morning and support us in keeping our promises. When we observe that we're slipping in to either/or thinking, we can also ask ourselves: What if? What if both options were possible? We become curious, and willing to explore options previously not seen. If this sounds like look, see, tell the truth and taken an authentic action, it is.

Practicing the coaching model helps us to make the shift from the constricted, limited energy of either/or to the open, receptive, curious energy of both/and. This is a wonderful example of monkey being seen and experienced as "the loyal opposition," of giving us the opportunity to practice our principles and cross the border with a renewed sense of optimism and clarity.