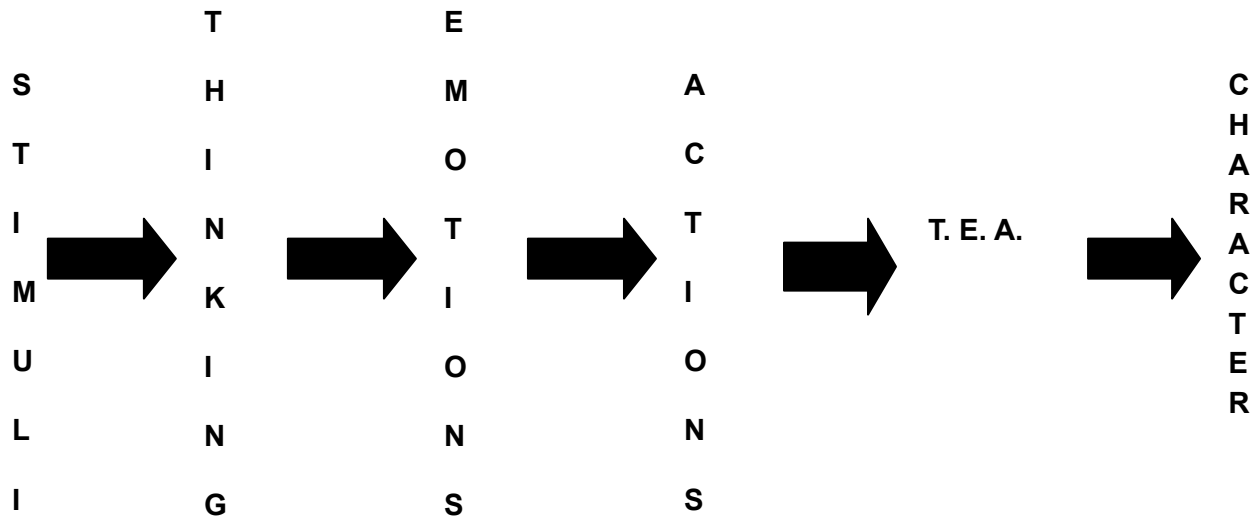


Issues of Life Chart "How Do We Process Life?"



Stimuli - Stuff happens to us everyday! People hurt us. We experience a sickness, a financial setback, a job concern, etc.

Thinking - The Bible teaches that we 'think' something about that event whether we are conscious of it or not. We are thinking and talking to ourselves about what is happening all the time... at an incredible rate throughout each day: "This is not fair." "Where is God?" "I deserve better than this." "I can't handle this." "No one understands." Etc. This 'thinking' is the control center, the motive, and the will. The Bible speaks of the 'heart' and 'mind' interchangeably in many places. The 'heart' or 'mind' is the control center of our life. When the Bible speaks of the 'heart' it is not usually referring to emotions or feelings. To speak of emotions or feelings the Bible usually refers to bowels or internal organs.

Prov. 23:7 "... as a man **thinks** in his heart so is he."

Prov. 4:23 "Guard your **heart** with all diligence, for out of it flows the issues of life."

2 Cor. 10:5 "Casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, taking every **thought** captive to the obedience of Christ."

Romans 12:2 "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Ephesians 4:22-24 "That you put off concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be **renewed** in the spirit of your **mind**, and

that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness."

Phil. 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report... **think** on these things."

Emotions - Based on what we are thinking we begin to experience emotions: fear, anxiety, anger, depression, envy, etc. Our feelings do not erupt out of a vacuum. Our feelings flow out of our thinking.

Actions - Based on what we are feeling we begin to make choices and take action. It is very difficult (though not impossible) to act contrary to your emotions. Most people struggle to rise above their feelings. For example, we pull away from people and things / circumstances when we are afraid. We slow down and begin to neglect our responsibilities when we are depressed. Etc.

T. E. A. - Character - Over a period of time if someone continues to think, emote and act in the same way in any given circumstance it becomes a habit and can become 'rooted' in them so that it becomes a part of their character. It represents who they are. It now characterizes them. For example, everyone has gotten angry on occasion, but some people could be characterized as 'an angry man' or 'angry woman.' They stay angry. It is who they are. They get in a rut, and it is very difficult for them to not go right down that same path without even thinking. One event will trigger them and they are on their way - *they think, feel and begin to act the same way they did the last time* - all in one short moment. To go that direction requires little or no effort on their part, and to try to do otherwise will 'feel' so hard that they will exclaim, "I can't do differently. That's just how I am. I can't change." For the Christian this is never true. The Christian can change, but it will be hard work.

