

## **Changing Negative Thoughts About Yourself to Positive Ones**

You may be giving yourself negative messages about yourself. Many people do. These are messages that you learned when you were young. You learned from many different sources including other children, your teachers, family members, caregivers, even from the media, and from prejudice and stigma in our society.

Once you have learned them, you may have repeated these negative messages over and over to yourself, especially when you were not feeling well or when you were having a hard time. You may have come to believe them. You may have even worsened the problem by making up some negative messages or thoughts of your own. These negative thoughts or messages make you feel bad about yourself and lower your self-esteem.

Some examples of common negative messages that people repeat over and over to themselves include: "I am a jerk," "I am a loser," "I never do anything right," "No one would ever like me," "I am a klutz." Most people believe these messages, no matter how untrue or unreal they are. They come up immediately in the right circumstance, for instance if you get a wrong answer you think "I am so stupid." They may include words like *should*, *ought*, or *must*. The messages tend to imagine the worst in everything, especially you, and they are hard to turn off or unlearn.

You may think these thoughts or give yourself these negative messages so often that you are hardly aware of them. Pay attention to them. Carry a small pad with you as you go about your daily routine for several days and jot down negative thoughts about yourself whenever you notice them. Some people say they notice more negative thinking when they are tired, sick, or dealing with a lot of stress. As you become aware of your negative thoughts, you may notice more and more of them.

It helps to take a closer look at your negative thought patterns to check out whether or not they are true. You may want a close friend or counselor to help you with this. When you are in a good mood and when you have a positive attitude about yourself, ask yourself the following questions about each negative thought you have noticed:

- Is this message really true?
- Would a person say this to another person? If not, why am I saying it to myself?
- What do I get out of thinking this thought? If it makes me feel badly about myself, why not stop thinking it?

You could also ask someone else—someone who likes you and who you trust—if you should believe this thought about yourself. Often, just looking at a thought or situation in a new light helps.

The next step in this process is to develop positive statements you can say to yourself to replace these negative thoughts whenever you notice yourself thinking them. You can't think two thoughts at the same time. When you are thinking a positive thought about yourself, you can't be thinking a negative one. In developing these thoughts, use positive words like *happy*, *peaceful*, *loving*, *enthusiastic*, *warm*.

Avoid using negative words such as *worried, frightened, upset, tired, bored, not, never, can't*. Don't make a statement like "*I am not going to worry any more.*" Instead say "*I focus on the positive*" or whatever feels right to you. Substitute "*it would be nice if*" for "*should.*" Always use the present tense, e.g., "*I am healthy, I am well, I am happy, I have a good job,*" as if the condition already exists. Use *I, me, or your own name.*

You can do this by folding a piece of paper in half the long way to make two columns. In one column write your negative thought and in the other column write a positive thought that contradicts the negative thought as shown on the next page.

You can work on changing your negative thoughts to positive ones by —

- Replacing the negative thought with the positive one every time you realize you are thinking the negative thought.
- repeating your positive thought over and over to yourself, out loud whenever you get a chance and even sharing them with another person if possible.
- writing them over and over.
- making signs that say the positive thought, hanging them in places where you would see them often-like on your refrigerator door or on the mirror in your bathroom-and repeating the thought to yourself several times when you see it.

Negative Thought	Positive Thought
I am not worth anything.	I am a valuable person.
I have never accomplished anything.	I have accomplished many things.
I always make mistakes.	I do many things well.
I am a jerk.	I am a great person.
I don't deserve a good life.	I deserve to be happy and healthy.
I am stupid.	I am smart.

It helps to reinforce the positive thought if you repeat it over and over to yourself when you are deeply relaxed, like when you are doing a deep-breathing or relaxation exercise, or when you are just falling asleep or waking up.

Changing the negative thoughts you have about yourself to positive ones takes time and persistence. If you use the following techniques consistently for four to six weeks, you will notice that you don't think these negative thoughts about yourself as much. If they recur at some other time, you can repeat these activities. Don't give up. You deserve to think good thoughts about yourself.

# 3 Ways To Cure Negative Thoughts Fast

Do you ever find yourself getting stuck in negative thought patterns and expecting the worst possible outcome in every situation? It's a far too common mind-set that can be near impossible to change, even when you've finally decide you've had enough. Much like weeds, negative thoughts tend to multiply on their own, even when you're not consciously trying to think negatively. The good news is turning a negative outlook into a positive one requires just a little patience and persistence.

Here's three simple steps to begin forming positive expectations on a daily basis:

## 1) Develop self-awareness to recognize negative expectations.

One problem with negative thoughts is that they often form below your conscious level of awareness, and you get so used to them being in your head that you hardly notice anymore. To turn from negative to positive, you'll have to develop a stronger level of self-awareness. One good way to start is by performing self-checks several times a day. Pay attention first to how you feel. If you're feeling positive and productive, most likely you've been thinking positive thoughts. However, if you notice that you are feeling stressed, pessimistic or irritable, you're probably focusing more on negative thoughts. When that happens:

## 2) Challenge and change the negative thoughts.

Believe it or not, it's fairly easy to challenge and change negative thoughts with a little willpower and concentration. For example, if you find yourself feeling doubtful about your ability to finish your work on time, you might engage in a bit of self-talk like this: "Okay, so I'm feeling a bit worried right now, but really everything is okay. I'm strong, I'm smart and I'm capable of finishing my work on time. I'll do my best and everything will work out fine." Even though nothing has changed in your outer circumstances, this type of self-talk can get you thinking and feeling more positive.

## 3) Work on developing positive expectation.

At the same time, while you're changing negative thoughts to positive, work daily on developing a general positive expectation habit. Each day when you wake up, affirm confidently, "Today is going to be a great day! Everything will go my way and I'll enjoy plenty of lucrative opportunities and fun!"

When you encounter obstacles or problems, see them as opportunities to learn, grow and strengthen yourself. Perception is 99% of the game! If you simply work on shifting the way you look at the experiences of your life, you can easily conquer your negative thought habits.

The more you focus on changing your perspective to emphasize the positive, the more you'll empower yourself to create better circumstances in your life. Before you know it, you'll be enjoying better and more frequent opportunities and attracting other like minded, successful people to connect with.

Thoughts are powerful things; whatever you put your focus on will grow. [Imagine](#) that your mind is a garden. You can fill your mind with beautiful flowers or let it become overgrown and out of control with weeds. What is it to be? We can't have two opposing thoughts at the same time! If you want a flourishing garden; out must come the weeds.

Positive thinking leads to a positive attitude. Maintaining a positive attitude is really a decision to be happy, it's your choice. Buddha summarized how to remain happy no matter how bad things may seem when he said, "Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us be thankful.

Positive thinking is not easy to achieve as we are geared from a young age to think the worst of most situations. Look at the daily news headlines, its all [doom](#) and gloom.

Positive thinking is something we can all profit from and we need to be reminded of this often. It might be reading a quote every morning or getting up each morning and saying, "Today I will think positively". Positive thinking is quite literally just that. Replace thinking about [the things](#) that could or have gone amiss, with the things that you have executed well or those things that have worked out as you anticipated or better. It will become an actual lifestyle that is the basis for everything that you do.

Positive thinking is like a pair of eyeglasses. Having the right pair can make all the difference. There is a technique called re-framing. I guess it is taking that pair of glasses off and putting on another pair. Re-framing would be choosing to interpret the situation in a positive way which you would previously be looked at in a negative way.

Re-framing is an excellent way to break the negative attention cycle, and it helps prevent you from getting pulled into the negative downward spiral. Once it becomes a habit, the whole world and everyone in it are seen in terms of "what is right" rather than "what is wrong". It is a way of presenting old situations in another frame. It is seeing the glass half full; not half empty.

This requires practice! That right its a practice! This type of thinking is incredibly powerful.

You don't want to live next to an abattoir? It could be worse, it could be an ammunitions factory run by psyco's. It's a paradigm shift. It's looking at life and events in life in a new context. It's like looking at a painting - you can choose where to focus your attention and from there base what you will feel. Its a powerful stratagem. It changes our perceptions about the situation, and will therefore effect our actions.

In fact research makes it clear that positive thinking and attitude is more important than any other factor when it comes to ensuring success. Negative emotions may suppress the immune system for up to 6 hours following the negative emotional experience.

Positive thinking should be the mechanism we use to support good outcome in our lives. It will maximize positive emotions and therefore productiveness and therefore a better quality of life.