

## Conquering Negative Self Talk

Low self-esteem can cause negative self-talk. This can further lower your self-esteem causing a vicious cycle where you continually feel bad about yourself. The good news is that you can change the way you talk to and about yourself. When you conquer negative self-talk, your self-esteem will improve. You'll gain more self-confidence and you'll feel more optimistic about your life in general.

If you're ready to break the cycle of negativity, you need to understand these essential truths.

### **Actions follow thoughts, so your thoughts are important.**

Your actions always begin with your thoughts. If you think that you're destined to be overweight, then it doesn't matter how many diet books you buy or how many nutritionists you talk to, you're still going to be overweight. You'll stay overweight because you haven't changed your mindset.

If you want to change your life, you have to change your thoughts first. Instead of thinking that you're destined to be overweight, flip the script. Say to yourself, 'I am in control of what I eat and how much I eat'. Doing this changes the story you're telling yourself. You just went from the victim in this story to the victor.

### **You don't have to be carried away by negative thoughts.**

You are the only one with the power to change your mental soundtrack. Just because you have a negative thought doesn't mean you have to listen to it. You have the power to change your focus. Instead of concentrating on the terrible day you had, start thinking about a simple pleasure you're anticipating like getting to change into your warm pajamas tonight or hearing your son's laughter during a silly bedtime game. By focusing on the positive, you're teaching yourself to let go of negative thoughts.

### **Garbage In = Garbage Out**

It's hard to stay positive if you're constantly consuming negative information. If you really want to change your negative self-talk, then you have to focus on consuming good stuff. You want to read and watch content that lifts you up. Not only will you feel better, you'll notice that your self-talk is more optimistic when you focus on the good.

### **Practice positive affirmations.**

What you say about yourself becomes your truth. That's why it can be helpful to practice positive affirmations every day. Start by looking in the mirror and telling yourself, 'Today, I

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choose to be happy' or 'Today, I choose to fully accept myself'. When you speak these thoughts out loud, they'll begin to affect how you talk to yourself and how you live your life.

Everyone struggles with negative self-talk at some point in their life. The important thing is not to beat yourself up when you realize your thoughts are negative. Accept that you had a negative thought and replace it with a positive one.

These steps will help you to:

## **Enhance Positive Thought Patterns**

Step 1:

### **Realize that your thoughts are real:**

- You have a thought.
- Your brain releases chemicals.
- An electrical transmission goes across your brain.
- You become aware of what you're thinking

Thoughts are real, and they have a real impact on how you feel and how you behave.

Step 2:

### **Notice how your body reacts to every thought you have.**

*Notice how negative thoughts affect your body.*

Every time you have an angry thought, an unkind thought, a sad thought, or a cranky thought, your brain releases chemicals that make your body feel bad. Think about the last time you were mad, how did your body feel? When most people are angry, their muscles become tense, their heart beats faster, their hands start to sweat, and they may even begin to feel a little dizzy. Your body reacts to every negative thought you have.

*Notice how positive thoughts affect your body.*

Step 3:

### **Understand that your automatic thoughts don't always tell the truth.**

Unless you think about your thoughts, they are automatic; "They just happen". But even if your thoughts just happen, they are not necessarily correct. Your thoughts do not always tell the whole truth. Sometimes they even lie to you.

Step 4:

**Talk back to the ANTs** ( automated negative talk ~taken from Daniel Amen ):

You can train your thoughts to be positive and hopeful, or you can allow them to be negative and upset you. Once you learn about your thoughts, you can choose to think good thoughts and feel better, or you can choose to think bad thoughts and feel lousy. That's right, it's up to you!

**Beware of the ANTS---Automatic Negative Thoughts:** Here are nine ways your thoughts may lie to you

1. "Always/never" thinking: thinking in words like always, never, no one, everyone, every time, everything
2. Focusing on the negative: seeing only the bad in a situation.
3. Fortune-telling: predicting the worst possible outcome to a situation.
4. Mind reading: Believing that you know what others are thinking, even though they haven't told you.
5. Thinking with your feelings: Believing negative feelings without ever questioning them
6. Guilt beating: Thinking in words like should, must, ought, or have to
7. Labeling: Attaching a negative label to yourself or to someone else.
8. Personalizing: Investing innocuous events with personal meaning.
9. Blaming: Blaming someone else for your own problems

ANTs have illogical logic. By bringing them into the open and examining them on a conscious level, you can see for yourself how little sense it really makes to think these kinds of things to yourself. You take back control over your own life instead of leaving your fate to conditioned negative thought patterns.

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Whenever you notice an ANT entering your mind, train yourself to recognize it and write it down and then shift the thought.

Here are some examples of ways to shift these ANTs:

<b>ANT</b>	<b>species of ANT</b>	<b>Shift the ANT</b>
You never listen to me.	“Always/never” thinking	I get frustrated when you don’t listen to me, but I know you have listened to me and will again.
The boss doesn’t like me.	Mind Reading	I don’t know that. Maybe she’s just having a bad day. Bosses are people too.
The whole class will laugh at me.	Fortune-telling	I don’t know that. maybe they’ll really like my speech.
I’m stupid	Labeling	Sometimes I do things without thinking.
It’s your fault we have these marital problems	Blaming	I need to look at my part of the problem and look for ways I can make the situation better.

**ANT**

**SPECIES**

**SHIFT THE ANT**

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