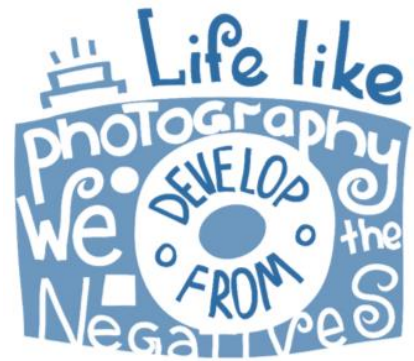


How to Overcome Negative Thoughts

“We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are.” Anais Nin

“Having a positive mental attitude is asking how something can be done rather than saying it can’t be done.” Bo Bennett

“It’s better to be an optimist who is sometimes wrong than a pessimist who is always right.” Unknown



It starts with just a thought or a feeling. Or maybe with a sentence spoken by someone else.

And then it starts to drag you down.

Into feeling sorry for yourself, worried or into thinking “what’s the point of taking any action at all?” as you walk around in a funk with your own personal rain cloud above your head.

Negativity that wells up inside of you or in the world around you can quickly become toxic and hold you back from living the life you want. So, in this week’s session I want to share with you 12 tips and habits that could not only help you prevent and overcome your own negative thoughts but also the negativity that’s sometimes surrounds you.

1. When You’re in What Seems Like a Negative Situation, Find What’s Good or Helpful.

If you’ve had a setback, stumbled or failed then things might look bleak and so negative thoughts may start to crop up and threaten to fill your view of this situation.

To counteract that ask yourself better questions.

Questions that will help you to feel better and to learn so you can grow.

Questions like:

- What’s one good thing about this situation?
- What’s one thing I can do differently the next time, to have a better outcome?
- What’s one thing I can learn from this?
- How would my best friend support and help me in this situation?

2. Reminder: People Don't Care That Much About What You Say or Do.

It's easy to fall into negative thoughts when you think about what people may say or think if you do or do not do something. And so, you zap your personal power and may trap yourself in analysis paralysis.

Getting stuck in your head and in thoughts like that will drag you further away from what you want and from reality.

Because the truth is that people don't have that much time, attention or energy to think or talk about what you do. They have their hands and minds full with their kids, jobs, pets, hobbies and their own fears and worries (like for example what people may think of them).

This realisation and reminder can help you to set yourself free from the constraints you may create in your own mind and help you to start taking small - or bigger steps - towards what you deep down want in your life.

3. Question the Thought.

One thing to do when a negative thought taps you on the shoulder and tries to start growing in your mind is to simply to question that thought.

Ask yourself:

Should I take this seriously?

This most often leads to thinking: well, no, I honestly shouldn't.

Because at that moment in time you could be tired, overworked or very busy with something else and so negativity can try to cloud your mind.

Or you could be getting too focused on one small mistake or one bad day.

Instead of focusing on the other 95% of your life that tends to be positive.

This question could help you to see that just because you did one small thing wrong doesn't mean that you did poorly overall. Or that this one negative thing doesn't mean that things will get worse and stay like that for a long time. Not if you chose optimism and to take small steps forward.

Basically, this question gives you a reality check and grounds you to a level-headed perspective again.

4. Replace the Negativity in Your Surroundings.

What you let into your mind in your everyday life will have big effect on you. So, start questioning what you allow in.

Ask yourself:

What are the top 3 sources of negativity in my life?

It could be people, websites, magazines, podcasts, music and so on.

Then ask yourself:

What can I do to spend less time with these 3 sources this week?

If you can't find ways to do that right now for all three of them then take a smaller step and focus on doing that with just one of these sources.

Then spend the time you've freed up this week on more positive sources and people that are already in your life or that you want to explore and perhaps make a new part of it.

5. Stop Making Mountains Out of Molehills.

To stop a small negative thought from becoming a big monster in your mind confront it early. You can do that by for example using tip #3 in this article.

Or you can zoom out. Do that by asking yourself a question like:
Will this matter in 5 years? Or even 5 weeks?

This answer is likely in most cases that it won't and that you were only starting to make a mountain out of a molehill (or out of plain air).

6. Let It Out and Talk It Over.

Keeping negative thoughts that are starting to cloud your whole mind bottled up won't help.

So, let them out. Talk the situation or your thoughts over with someone close to you.

Just venting for a few minutes can often help you to see the situation in new light. Or if not then a conversation about it where the two of you find a more useful perspective and perhaps the start of an action-plan can be both relieving and recharging.

7. Live In and Come Back to This Moment.

When you're tapping into negative thinking then you're often thinking about something that happened. Or something that may happen. Or both, all jumbled up as your mood and thoughts sink.

To snap out of that put your attention fully into this moment instead. Into what's here right now.

Start making it a habit to spend more of your time in the present moment and you'll, in my experience, naturally have less negative thoughts and be more open and constructive.

A couple of ways to bring yourself back to being mindful and this moment are:

Focus Only On Your Breathing. Take a 1-2-minute pause right now and take a little deeper breath than you usually do. Make sure you're breathing with your stomach and through your nose. During this time focus only on the air going in and out and nothing else.

Take In The World Around You. Take a 1-2-minute break, get out of your head and put your attention on what's around you right now. Nothing else. Just focus on the people walking by outside your window, the muffled words and noises from the street, the smells around you and the sun shining in and warming your skin.

8. Go for A Short Workout.

When you are having trouble with thinking yourself out of negativity it often works well to change your headspace by using your body.

So, go for a 20-30-minute workout and lift some free weights or power walk.

This will help you to release inner tension and worries. And it may make your mind focused and constructive once again.

9. Don't Let the Vague Fears Drag You Down.

One common mistake people make when it comes to fears is to become scared and run away from them instead of taking a closer look.

It's of course natural to feel that impulse and to want to avoid it but when fears are vague they can become so much scarier than they need to.

So, what can you do? One thing is to ask yourself this question:

Realistically, what's the worst that could happen in this situation?

When you start to ground a fear like that and begin to look at it with your feet firmly planted on the ground then you most often realize that the worst that could happen isn't that bad.

It's often something you can plan to come back from it were to happen.

And you can also probably start listing and acting on a few things that will reduce the likelihood of this worst-case scenario happening.

By doing this you gain clarity about the situation and what you can do about it and so the fear does tend to become quite a bit smaller.

10. Bring Positivity Into Someone Else's Life.

If you get stuck in negative thoughts or victim thinking, then one of the simplest ways to get out of your own head and the thoughts bouncing around in there is to focus outwards and on someone else.

By adding positivity to his or her life in some way you too can start to feel better and more optimistic again.

A few ways to add positivity to someone's life is to:

Be Kind. Give him a genuine compliment, hold up the door or let him into your lane while driving your car.

Help-Out. Give her some good advice that have helped you or help-out with moving houses or planning and preparing for the party next weekend.

Just Be There. Listen for a few minutes in a focused way as he vents. Or talk his difficult situation over to help him to start finding his way out of it.

11. Be Grateful For A Few Of the Things You May Often Take for Granted.

When we get negative it's easy to forget the positive things in life.

Especially the ones that are just a normal part of life that we may take for granted a bit too often.

A few such things that could put your attention on and feel grateful for during such negative times are:

Three steady meals a day.

A roof over my head during the cold nights and the rainy and windy days.

As much clean water as I want.

Kind and helpful family and friends.

12. Start Tomorrow in A Way That Sets a Positive Tone for Your Day.

How you start your day often sets the tone for it.

A pessimistic or negative start makes it hard to turn things around. But a positive start makes it a lot easier to just keep going with that emotion and the optimistic way of thinking until it is bedtime again.

A couple of simple ways to get your day off to a positive start is:

A simple reminder that you see right after you wake up. It could be one or a couple of quotes that inspire you.

Or maybe the goal or dream that you're most passionate about right now. Write it down on a piece of paper and place it on your bedside table or on the fridge. Or type it in as a part of the lock screen on your smart phone.

Get some positive information or conversation flowing into your mind. Listen to a podcast, read a new blog post or a chapter in a book that motivates you or makes you laugh. Or have a fun or uplifting conversation with your partner, kids or a co-worker.

