

Saying No to Negative Thinking Worksheet

11 Styles of Negative Thinking

1. Filtering: You see and hear only the things you have selected. Your attention is awakened only by particular kinds of information loss, rejection, unfairness, and so on. You have blind spots that obscure evidence of your worth. It's as though you only let in the info that matches the way you feel about yourself.

2. Polarizing: This is often referred to as "black and white" thinking. This can be particularly damaging to self-esteem, since you will see yourself as worthless if you aren't absolutely perfect. Watch for self-talk that sounds like "If I mess this up, I'm a hopeless failure."

3. Overgeneralization: This is a common distortion that plagues a lot of us. It has to do with taking one isolated fact or event and making a general rule out of it. For example, one date with an ice skater does not go well, so you decide that all ice skaters will find you boring. When you hear these words in your self-talk, listen up! These are clues to overgeneralization: never, always, all, every, none, everyone, nobody, etc.

4. Mind Reading: This is when your self-talk assumes that everyone else is exactly like you. Mind reading is fatal to self-esteem, because you are especially liable to think that everyone agrees with your negative opinions of yourself. When you mind read, you think your perception is right and you act as if it is right, never stopping to check out what other people's reality is. Say you have a friend who frowns a lot. You leap to conclusions without any real evidence that they are mad at you.

5. Self-blame: You blame yourself for everything, whether it's your fault or not. You feel responsible for things that are out of your control.

6. Personalization: This is the "it's all about me" self-talk. The way this shows up in negative self-talk and damages your self-esteem is that any time there is mention of a problem, you automatically assume that they are talking about you. You negatively compare yourself to others

7. Control Fallacies: Control fallacies either put you in control of the whole universe, or put everyone but you in charge. You struggle to control every aspect of every situation. You hold yourself responsible for everything that goes wrong. You either feel that you have total responsibility for everything, or feel that you have no control and are a helpless victim always waiting for someone else to fix things.

8. Shoulds: You have a list of ironclad rules about how you and other people should act. People who break the rules anger you and you feel guilty if you violate the rules.

9. Fallacy of Change: You expect that other people will change to suit you if you just pressure and cajole them enough. You need to change people because your hopes for happiness seem to depend entirely on them.

10. Global Labeling: You generalize one or two qualities into a global judgment. If you catch yourself fixing labels on everything that once and for all defines them in a negative light, watch yourself. You may be labeling things as a way to avoid dealing with them in a dynamic way. Here are some clues: My house is a pigsty, I'm a poor money manager, my boss is a grouch, my roommate is a slob, I'm awful at math, etc.

11. Emotional reasoning: You discount your rational thinking and rely solely on how you feel about thing to understand them. You believe that what you feel must be true automatically. If you feel stupid and boring, you are stupid and boring - if you feel useless, you must be useless.

Negative thinking is often a symptom of mood disorders. This worksheet can help you to spot negative thoughts and confront them with more realistic ideas. Print this page and add your own thoughts and responses.

Negative Thought	Rational Response	New Thought
I'm a failure at everything.	I haven't failed at every single thing I've done.	I'm not always sucessful but I do have some abilities.
I will never feel better.	Never is a long time - I don't know how I'll feel tomorrow.	Even though I feel terrible right now, I won't always feel this way.