

Changing your thinking with cognitive behavioral therapy..

A simple exercise to challenge your negative automatic thinking, and replace with healthy alternative thinking...



Catch the negative thought: Keep a journal, taking notes of the actual thoughts you are thinking when you're in a situation that upsets you and ends in self-limiting and self-sabotaging behaviour. Example: 'It's going to be awful, I'm going to embarrass myself...' - (and then avoiding an event).

Thought Stop: As you notice yourself saying these negative automatic thoughts, you can stop them mid-stream by saying to yourself "STOP". Saying it aloud, or silently in your head if you are with people. You might also **wear a rubber band or elastic bracelet around your wrist**, giving it a little twang each time you notice you are allowing negative thinking to take over your head in a never-ending loop. It will make you more aware of how often, and in what situation, you are having negative thoughts, and it will give you a structure and new habit.



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Challenge the negative thought: Challenge the thoughts, examine them to see if they're valid. 'Where's the evidence for this? Is there another way to look at it?'. Example: 'Actually, that's fortune telling, I don't actually know what's going to happen ...'. And 'I'm mind reading again, those are my thoughts not his - I do not know other peoples thoughts or motivations, I can only do my best...'.

Try it yourself!

Summary: reappraise, re-frame, and replace Note the negative thought – stop it in its tracks – examine it for evidence – and if you decide it is irrational and unhelpful, replace it with alternative healthy thinking - consciously and deliberately. Here is an example:

Negative Automatic Thoughts	Positive Thought Replacement
Nobody likes me	That's not a true statement. My family like me, and I have my friend from work and my friend from school. And I got on well with many other people now that I think of it. Also, not everybody will adore and admire me in this life. I accept that. It's the same for everybody. Also, if somebody does think little of you, you don't have to agree with it ...
It's going to be awful, I'm going to embarrass myself...	Actually, that's fortune telling, I don't know what's going to happen, all I can do is my best, maybe I'll be a bit anxious, I can cope with that if it happens, and it might not happen, I was okay last week at that other ...

Go for it...

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