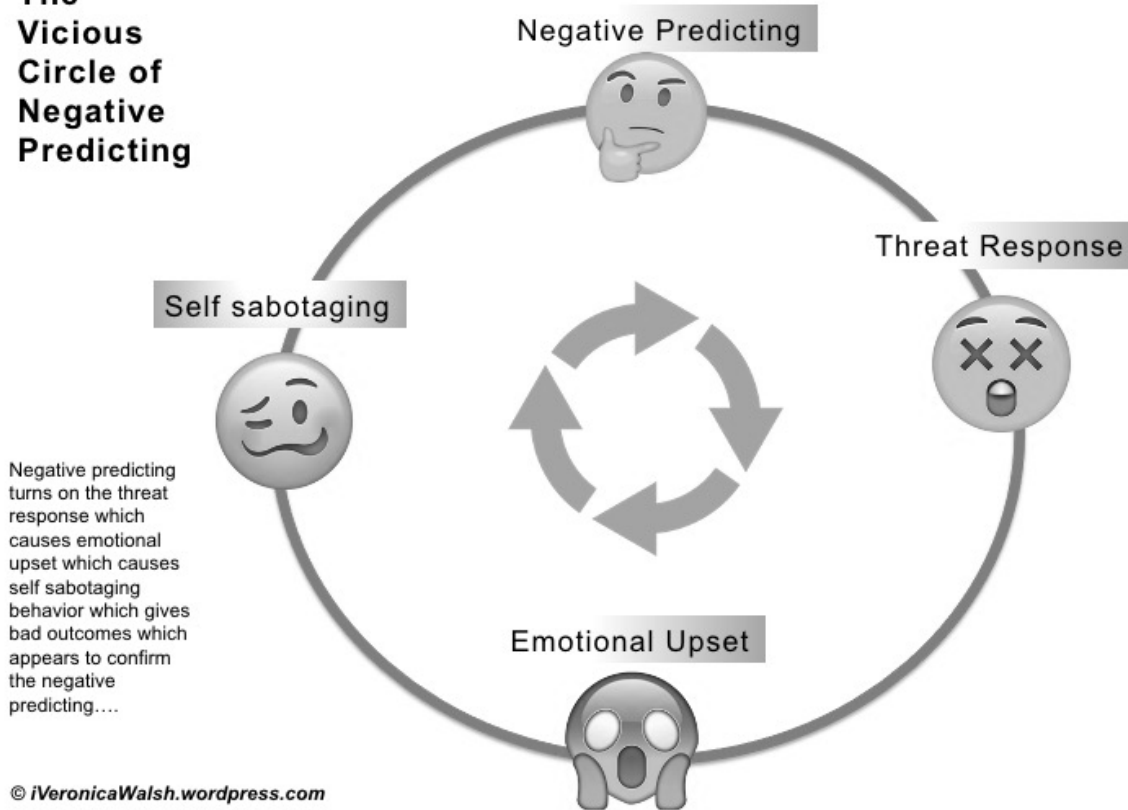


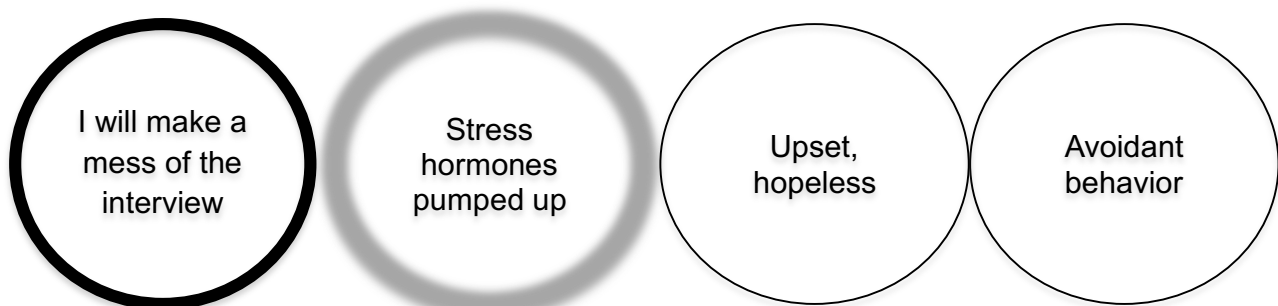
Map and journal your thoughts and beliefs and your threat response, so that you can examine both to see if they are healthy and proportional to events, or unhealthy and over the top. Are you rationally anticipating and problem solving? Or are you using the bad habit of Negative Predicting?

The Vicious Circle of Negative Predicting



‘HOW AM I EXPLAINING THE WORLD TO MYSELF?’ A situational anxiety of a job interview example:

- **Thinking** (predicting) that *‘I am going to make a mess of the interview’*
- Pumps up my **threat response** / stress hormones
- and makes me **feel** very upset and hopeless
- which stops me persuading myself to prepare properly and show up doing my best



The great intellectual thinkers through the ages tried to show us this model of how to be happy. Buddha said 'with our thoughts we make our world'. Shakespeare said 'Nothing is good or bad, thinking makes it so'. The Greek Stoic Epictetus said 'It is not an event that causes man's upset, it is man's interpretation of the event'. And my favourite Mark Twain said 'I've been through terrible things in this life, and some of them actually happened'.

Scientists refer to we humans as '**predicting machines**, it's our job to anticipate and problem-

solve, and to make choices of responses to things that happen – to survive and to do well. We have a constant internal narrative going, which is often very simplistic and dramatic – e.g. a prediction like 'I am going to make a mess of the interview!', which might be based on our over active threat response rather than rational evidence. If we absolutely accept that prediction, why would we show up at an

interview at all? Much less be motivated to prepare well? This is an example of the bad thinking habit of 'Negative Predicting' – where we mistakenly assume that we are just **anticipating and problem solving**, and simply protecting ourselves from hurts or disappointments – 'I could try that, but it won't work out', 'I could go but I wouldn't have a good time', 'that would be awful', 'I won't fit in', 'I'll be uncomfortable', 'I can't be bothered', and so on. Negatively predicting threats fires up our threat response – and in many cases *the threat response becomes the threat*.

CBT models teach engaged learners to catch and DISPUTE negative self-talk by gathering evidence to reframe new thoughts and beliefs that are cool and rational and fit the facts - **thinking differently** - deliberately, consciously, over and over. But without understanding our physical threat response we're missing half the data.

A RATIONAL REFRAME interview example:: catch unhealthy self-talk, replace with healthy self-talk.

"Telling myself" I will make a mess of the interview!" is a bit dramatic and unhelpful. What does that even mean? What is 'a mess'? Statements like that make my stress hormones surge, as if it is literally true, and that my life and future and well-being are in great danger. If I accept that 'prediction' 100%, why would I show up to any interview at all? How could I be motivated and prepare, if I've already decided my fate. New cool moderate language to describe my worries using evidence would be better, something like: I'm very nervous about this interview and my adrenaline is spiking – I'm not feeling very confident that they will choose me. But I can't control every aspect of it, and feelings are not facts. I actually don't have a crystal ball to predict the future – I'm guessing, based on bits and pieces of evidence and experiences. What would I advise a friend in this situation? Maybe something like: "Just being invited to the interview means you have the basic skill set they require – if you show up and do your best that will be enough on your end - you have no idea of their biases or criteria, or even if it will be gone before you walked in, or if you will click with them and be the final pick... Predicting 'disaster' stops you being present, and preparing what you want to say to persuade them to give you the role. What's the worst that could happen? You'll be physically nervous and won't say everything smoothly like you planned? So what? Everybody does that, and a bit of nervousness is charming and disarming, and it's nobody's business but yours. The interview is practice for interviewing, you're just throwing your hat in the ring, it's actually exciting You don't have to get the job, you're just showing up.. It's ok, you're ok..".

SUMMARY –thought stop and edit distorted thinking -- keep a journal to map and regulate these 4 strands:

Think

Body

Feel

Behave