

www.CBTandFeelingGood.com - Changing your thinking: a 'thought replacement' worksheet

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 Stopping: 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 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 the negative thoughts.

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, 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 event even though I tortured myself before it with this kind of thinking...'

Summary: reframe 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. Here is an example:

Negative Automatic Thoughts	Reframe Rational 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 college. 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. I'm okay, it's okay.
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 ...
I can't cope!	That's a bit silly. If I 'couldn't cope' I'd drop down dead or burst into flames, yet here I am. It's more true to say that I have problems coping, and I wish I didn't have to cope, and that I'm doing my best. Accepting that I can't cope as true only maximises my discomfort, and if I believe it I'll avoid things...

Try it for yourself!

Negative Automatic Thoughts

Reframe rational thought replacement
