

## The CBT of the 'Two Wolves' philosophy – Veronica Walsh

In CBT we try to develop awareness of how we are thinking - how we are explaining the world to ourselves - and to build the skill of awareness and regulation so that we can correct dramatic negative styles, and develop instead a cool calm rational style, that embraces reality but is also looking at the positives. If we change how we think, we can change how we feel and behave.



I find it very helpful to use the 'two wolves' story as a visualisation tool - this is a legend where a wise elderly native American Indian explains that we all have two wolves within us - one is negative, jealous, angry, greedy, unhappy, mean - the other is positive, wise, rational, present, accepting, and kind. Which wolf is active? *The one that you feed.* So, let's not feed the angry negative one.

In CBT we actively work to 'feed' and activate the rational kind calm wolf within us - and to coax and soothe the 'angry wolf', and talk it out of it's dramatic ideas, rather than accepting and feeding it.

Try a visualisation exercise where you catch your own bad thinking habits - and assign them to the angry wolf, letting your wise wolf take over and reframe the narrative instead. Build this exercise into your life in an organic everyday way, and discover the power of it in your own way in your own time.

It can be very helpful to use visualisation and mantras - and to imagine that the rational cool version of you is the *real you*, and that the negative distorted version of you is stress or anxiety thinking that can be managed and challenged and changed.

**The legend of the Two Wolves:** Copy and paste this text into the search in YouTube to view a lovely video that narrates the legend:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x95\\_BTeanl8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x95_BTeanl8)

*For more CBT resources go to [iVeronicaWalsh.wordpress.com](http://iVeronicaWalsh.wordpress.com)*