

How to Challenge Negative Self-Talk and a Lack of Confidence

We are our own worst critic.

Do you find yourself...

- ✓ Downplaying your achievements?
- ✓ Focussing on the negative?
- ✓ Refraining from starting something because you don't think you're 'ready'?
- ✓ Feeling like a fraud or a faker?
- ✓ Berating yourself when you make a mistake?
- ✓ Not telling people about your business because you're afraid they won't take you seriously?
- ✓ Thinking you don't have any original ideas?
- ✓ Never fully committing because you can then blame your lack of success on 'not having the time'?

Surprise! Everyone has these thoughts sometimes.

The key is learning how to separate truth from fiction, and challenging false beliefs!

Caveat:

There is a difference between regular negative thoughts & anxiety. If you think you have the latter – see a doctor.

But how do you do this?

- ✓ There are a few ways you can work out if a thought is truthful, or just your fear talking, and then work to overcome fearful thinking.
- ✓ First – start to become more mindful.
- ✓ Second – talk it out with someone you trust.
- ✓ Third – write it down and really examine it.
- ✓ Fourth – take action!

1. Become More Mindful

- ✓ The first step is actually noticing these false thoughts, because until we become conscious of them, we can't challenge them.
- ✓ Whenever you catch yourself having a false negative thought, shout 'NO' inside your head. Take 3-5 slow, deep breaths, and either just try to separate yourself from the thought and examine it, or use your counter (more on that later).
- ✓ You can build this 'mindfulness muscle' through mindfulness training.
- ✓ Further Reading: [Create & Thrive on Mindfulness](#)

2. Talk it Out

- ✓ Actually speaking your thoughts can help you to hear the truthfulness of them.
- ✓ Furthermore, sharing your thoughts with someone who you trust to be honest and caring can help you to work out what is truth, and what is false.
- ✓ Try to choose someone who doesn't have a vested interest – someone who you know isn't going to try to convince you of the 'truth' of false negative thoughts for their own ends.
- ✓ If you don't have someone in your life, come over and share your thoughts with us in the Circle, and we can help you.

3. Write it Down and Examine

- ✓ Avoidance is a very common strategy for dealing with a lack of confidence.
- ✓ You have to face your fears.
- ✓ Writing them down makes them concrete, and separates them from us a little bit – which can make them easier to examine objectively.
- ✓ You can also use the 'Challenge Questions' that follow to examine your thoughts about a situation.

Challenge Questions

1. *Reality testing*

- ✓ What is my evidence for and against my thinking?
- ✓ Are my thoughts factual, or are they just my interpretations?
- ✓ Am I jumping to negative conclusions?
- ✓ How can I find out if my thoughts are actually true?

2. *Look for alternative explanations*

- ✓ Are there any other ways that I could look at this situation?
- ✓ What else could this mean?
- ✓ If I were being positive, how would I perceive this situation?

Challenge Questions

3. Putting it in perspective

- ✓ Is this situation as bad as I am making out to be?
- ✓ What is the worst thing that could happen? How likely is it?
- ✓ What is the best thing that could happen?
- ✓ What is most likely to happen?
- ✓ Is there anything good about this situation?
- ✓ **Will this matter in five years time?**

4. Using goal-directed thinking

- ✓ Is thinking this way helping me to feel good or to achieve my goals?
- ✓ What can I do that will help me solve the problem?
- ✓ Is there something I can learn from this situation, to help me do it better next time?

Challenge Questions

Source: <http://psychcentral.com/lib/challenging-negative-self-talk/>

4. Take Action!

- ✓ You've examined your thoughts.
- ✓ You've determined which are true, and which are false.
- ✓ This is a process you can come back to again and again!
- ✓ Now – it's time to take action to move past these limiting thoughts and self-doubt!

Create your Counters

- ✓ For each negative/limiting thought or belief, come up with a counter that you can say to yourself silently when that limiting thought or belief pops up.
- ✓ For example, if one of your limiting thoughts is 'I can't figure this out' - your counter could be 'Everything is figureoutable'.
- ✓ Maybe a limiting belief you hold is 'I'm not technically-minded enough to sell online'. Counter this with 'I can learn anything I need to to reach my goal' or 'I can get help with the things I'm not confident doing alone until I am'.
- ✓ Refer to: YYTT Lesson 3

Celebrate Your Wins!

- ✓ Often, if we are lacking confidence, or have a habit of negative self-talk, we will gloss over or even actively downplay our achievements.
- ✓ You need to celebrate your wins!
- ✓ Share them with your support network.
- ✓ Have a ritual that you do to celebrate big achievements.
- ✓ And have something you do to celebrate the small wins – even if it's just pausing to have a relaxing cup of tea.
- ✓ Write your wins down in a journal, which you can refer back to when you feel like you haven't achieved anything.

Cultivate your Support Group

- ✓ Find 1-3 people (or more!) who are in your corner, whom you can turn to when you're struggling with fear or self-doubt.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to lean on them – and be their shoulder to lean on in return.
- ✓ Make a list of the people in your life – who makes you laugh? Who's down-to-earth and practical? Who's a dreamer with passion and big ideas? Then you'll know who to turn to when particular issues arise.

Cultivate Relaxation

- ✓ If you're living in a constantly high state of stress, then countering negative thoughts and self-doubt will be difficult.
- ✓ You need to cultivate practices in your life that help your relaxation response kick in – the 'rest and digest' or parasympathetic nervous system.
- ✓ Find what works for you – it might be yoga and meditation, or reading, or a bubble bath, or walking outside... and make a commitment to yourself to do this regularly (every day if possible!).
- ✓ Don't choose unhealthy avenues like food or alcohol – they are false relaxants.
- ✓ A relaxed mind is a saner, clearer mind :)

Questions?

