

Dealing With Lousy Thoughts

Stop getting stuck in your head!



“

ANDREW J. BERNSTEIN

**NEGATIVE
THOUGHTS STICK
AROUND BECAUSE
WE BELIEVE THEM,
NOT BECAUSE WE
WANT THEM OR
CHOOSE THEM.**

”

*If others were able to listen to the voice in your head,
what would they hear?*



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INTRODUCTION

What thoughts do you allow to run free and unchallenged in your mind?

If others were able to hear what you think, every thought that you have over the next few days, what would they hear? Would they hear positive self-talk? Would they hear negative self-talk? Would they hear complaining? Would they hear you saying awful things to yourself?

What thoughts would they hear about your emotions? Sadness? Anxiety? Fear? Anger? Frustration? Or something that ranges among and around a variety of those emotions?

Would they hear you beating yourself up about something that happened in the past? A mistake that you made that you can't seem to forgive yourself for doing? A failure that you cannot seem to forgive yourself for doing?

Would they hear you worrying about something in the future that may not even happen? Your anxiety about trying to control something that could be completely wrong?

When I ask this question, I get a mix of answers. Most people wince and tell me that they would not want anyone to listen to their thoughts. Why? Because they talk to themselves in mean and nasty ways.

Have you ever wondered where those lousy thoughts came from or when they started? I am sure that many of those thoughts are about yourself such as:

- I am not as pretty as Sally
- My car is not as nice as Jane's
- My house is not as well designed as Betty's
- I am always left out
- I will never be good enough

Being aware of your self-talk will help you to understand yourself better. When you dig into your self-talk and understand the messages that you are sending yourself, you may find that all of those things that you allow to roll around in your mind are lies.

Many times, the inner critic wants you to believe every single thing that it tells you. Let me tell you, you do NOT have to believe ONE WORD that your inner critic is telling you. The key here is to retrain your mind, teach your mind how to think and to rewire how your brain thinks. You do NOT have to stop the negative, anxious thinking...just be aware of it. When your awareness is heightened then, you can start to change the thought patterns.

Let's get started!

STEP #1

What beliefs do you have about yourself that keeps bringing up those thoughts?

You probably hear a lot of thoughts in your mind that you don't like very much. Do you ignore those thoughts and just let them run freely in the background of your mind?

Let me give you an example.

You are hanging out with a group of friends and you notice that you are starting to feel a bit uncomfortable but you can't seem to figure out why. You look up and notice that another person in the group is giving you a (seemingly) judgemental look. Your mind immediately begins to say, *I KNEW she didn't like me*. Your mind went into default mode and started to bring up that belief that people don't like you.

That thought is coming up from some background belief that you have from your past. You believe that others don't like you, your mind is pre-programmed to SEE that experience and validate your belief.

In reality, you have NO idea what that other person was thinking at that moment. She could have been thinking:

- *I left a mountain of dishes in the sink this morning*
- *I have a PILE of clothes that I need to wash tonight*
- *I have a huge project due tomorrow; I should figure out how to leave and go work on it*
- *My partner and I got into a BIG fight this morning and I feel awful about what I said*

My stomach aches, I am so uncomfortable and nauseous

Or she could be thinking the exact same thing that you were thinking: *look at her, she has her life all together but look at ME.*

The point is that you can NOT read her mind, or anyone else's mind but when you think that you know what they are thinking, it brings up the negative self-talk. You are going to see what you expect to see based on your personal beliefs.

When you get stuck in those negative beliefs, your inner critic is going to trigger negative self-talk to confirm what you already believe about yourself.

In this exercise, I want you to think about some of those negative statements that you believe in your mind. What experiences made you believe them and in what types of situations do they keep coming up?

Think of at least three experiences in your life that made you feel negatively about yourself. Let's dig into those a bit more.

STEP #2

What experiences brought about those lousy thoughts?

I hope that you can see that those lousy thoughts originate from negative beliefs that you have about yourself. After writing about those experiences, you probably have a list of reasons that validate why you have those negative self-beliefs.

For example, if you believe that you can't ever have a good, authentic romantic relationship then that thought may have began with one of these things:

- My dad left when I was young and abandoned me, I never heard from him again
- Everyone that I get close to hurts me
- My past partners have never connected to me like I connect to them
- Every past relationship ended badly and I ended up getting hurt

You have had real, hurtful experiences in the past that validate your negative beliefs and your mind cannot see anything different than those experiences. The good news is that when you dig into these experiences, you will see where those negative beliefs began and why all of those negative thoughts pop up when you least expect it.

Let's consider some alternatives to those thoughts. Start shifting your negative beliefs, find something positive even in the most hurtful and negative situations.

In the next exercise, I am going to ask you to look back over the previous experiences and ask you to find ways to invalidate that original belief. Spend as much time on this as you need but really be open to finding new ways to think about the negative things that you say to yourself in your mind.

This will take a lot of strength, perseverance, vulnerability, and determination but I know that you can do this. You may have carried around these negative beliefs for a very long time so, it may take some time to unravel everything that is tied to it.

Please understand, this will take time to retrain your mind so, be patient with yourself but keep working on it. Eventually, your mind will embrace this new way of thinking and your inner critic will grow silent and eventually fade away.

SELF GUIDED PROGRAMS

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Self Guided Programs

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