

8 QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU CHALLENGE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

It's important to keep an eye for negative self-talk patterns that can feed into anxiety, depression, or other health issues. Writing out your unhelpful thoughts is a great way to look at them head-on, challenge them, and explore alternative perspectives.

Choose one negative thought you can remember from the day and answer the following questions.

Thought to be assessed:

1. *Is my judgment based on the facts or on the way I feel?*
2. *Is there evidence **contrary** to my thought?*
3. *Am I using ultimatum words in my thinking? (always, never, forever)*
4. *Am I blaming myself for something that is not really my fault?*
5. *Am I expecting myself to be perfect?*
6. *Are there any **helpful** and **kind** ways I can interpret the situation?*
7. *What would I tell a friend if they had the same thought?*
8. *What can I do to solve the problem?*

BONUS

There are other 6 evidence-based techniques you can start practicing today to cope with negative thinking.



Grounding Techniques

Grounding focuses on distraction strategies is intended to help when you're overwhelmed with emotions. Grounding "anchors" you to the present and to reality, helping you get through stressful moments and gain control over negative or challenging emotions.

The 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding Technique. The goal with this exercise is to use the five senses to focus on the moment. It involves thinking about 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, and 1 thing you can taste in your immediate environment.

Play the categories game. Try to think of "types of dogs," jazz musicians," "states that begin with 'A'," "cars", "TV shows," "writers," "sports," "songs," "cities," , etc. Challenge your brain to list as many things in those categories as possible.

Describe the steps in performing an activity you know how to do well. For example, explain how to shoot a basketball, prepare your favorite meal, or tune a guitar. Go through the process step-by-step, as if you're giving someone else instructions on how to do it.

Read something, saying each word to yourself. Or you can read each letter backward so that you focus on the letters and not on the meaning of words.

Touch various objects around you; a pen, your clothing, the table, the walls. Notice textures, colors, materials, weight, temperature. Compare objects you touch; Is one colder? Lighter?

Carry a grounding object in your pocket – a small object (a small rock, clay, a ring, a piece of cloth or yarn) that you can touch whenever you feel triggered.

Move your body. Do a few exercises or stretches. For example, you can try jumping up and down, clenching and releasing your fists, walking slowly, stretching different muscle groups one by one. Pay attention to how your body feels with each movement and when your hands or feet touch the floor or move through the air.

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DOES YOUR PARTNER OR YOUR FRIEND

		Yes	No
1	Ignore your feelings and wishes		
2	Put you down, call you names or criticize you		
3	Tease and ridicule you about things that are important to you		
4	Not respect private information or secrets		
5	Check up and want to know what you are doing at all times		
6	Call or text you excessively		
7	Constantly question who you have been around or spoken to		
8	Check your phone or text messages without you knowing		
9	Act friendly when alone, but ignore you when friends are around		
10	Embarrass you in public or private through insults		
11	Keep you away from your friends, or put your friends down		
12	Won't accept breaking up, threaten to hurt themselves		
13	Encourage you to do things that make you feel uncomfortable		
14	Refuse to accept limits about sexual activity		
15	Feel jealous, possessive, won't let you have friends		
16	Accuse you of cheating or flirting		
17	Use guilt trips like, "if you loved me, you would..."		
18	Tell you what to do, what to wear, or how to act		
19	Always blame you for their behavior		
20	Behave violently (yell, throw things, hit things)		
21	Threaten suicide when they do not get their own way		
22	Physically hurt you, or threaten to		
23	Make you feel like you can't do anything right		




SELF-ESTEEM SENTENCE STEMS WORKSHEET

Completing this exercise can help you explore your thoughts and feelings and become more comfortable sharing them with others, making it easier to work through self-esteem issues.

Set aside 5 minutes 2-3 times a week to complete the worksheet. Review what you've written after two weeks of completing the worksheet. It can help you notice positive changes in your responses.

- *Right now, I'm happy that* _____
- *I have always wanted to* _____
- *I often look forward to* _____
- *I gain strength from* _____
- *I secretly enjoy* _____
- *Sometimes, I wish I could* _____
- *Something I did well today* _____
- *Today I had fun when* _____
- *I felt proud when* _____
- *Today I accomplished* _____
- *I had a positive experience with this person* _____
- *Something I did for someone* _____
- *I felt good about myself when* _____
- *I was proud of this person today* _____
- *Today was interesting because* _____

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SIGNS OF LOW SELF-ESTEEM CHECKLIST

People with low self-esteem tend to see themselves, the world, and their future more negatively and critically. They find it difficult to make decisions, excessively depend on the approval of others, and constantly question themselves. It can be hard to realize that you have low self-esteem, and often, this feeling has been around so long that it can really feel like it's just how you see the world.


**Here are some common signs of low self-esteem.
Which of them apply to you?**

- Focusing only on the negative aspects of life and ignoring your achievements**
- Lack of boundaries**
- Saying negative things and being critical about yourself**
- Negative body image**
- Thinking that other people are better than you and feeling worthless**
- Obsession with perfection and feeling that you are not good enough**
- Difficulty in expressing your own needs**
- Relying on others to make decisions**
- Trouble accepting compliments**
- Constantly comparing yourself to others**
- Feeling guilty for everyday actions**
- Apologizing frequently**
- Blaming yourself when things go wrong**
- Avoiding social interactions**
- Being hostile when confronted with criticism**
- Feeling sad, depressed, anxious, ashamed, angry, or worthless**
- Intense fear of failure, assuming the worst even if you have no evidence to support it**



What can you do to build healthy self-esteem? Read on to find out



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