

Positive Self-Talk

1. When it comes to thoughts, you have a lot of mind and control!! Your body listens and responds to your thoughts!!

Your mental self-talk can be: **POSITIVE** or **NEGATIVE**

2. Sports Psychology is a great example of the power of mind control. An athlete is taught to stay positive, to stay calm, be focused, be confident, to “see yourself as a winner,” and to “picture the ball going in the hole.” Many athletes find success with this positive thinking and imagery.
3. Another way of positive thinking and mind imagery is used in relaxation and relieving stress. You can imagine a scene, place, or event that you remember as peaceful, restful, beautiful, and happy. It acts as a retreat from places of stress and pressure; consequently, the body actually responds with a lower blood pressure and a lower pulse rate to calm down and relax.
4. Just as making positive statements to yourself help you to build confidence, improve performance, and improve your mental skills, negative thinking damages these things.

Our sub-conscious mind can't tell the difference between what is real and what is imagined! It takes any pictures, any thoughts that you send to it as reality. Once you direct an image or visualization to your sub-conscious brain, it will work 24 hours a day to make that image a reality, coming up with a plan to make those thoughts true for your life. So, choose your self-talk very carefully because your sub-conscious brain takes whatever you send it as real.

Examples: If you were taught as a child that all dogs will bite you, your mind will automatically raise that fear every time you see a dog. (Although your friend tells you that her dog is friendly, your mind believes and sends the fear message. You have to re-train your brain!!!)

If you continually say, “I’m really bad at math,” then your brain will send thought reminders to you like, “I can’t do this,” “This is too hard for me,” “I’ll never get this because I am bad at math.”

5. You can retrain and change your thinking by having positive self-talk. It’s not easy at first, but it can literally change your life!

Today, we are going to practice this difficult, but powerful positive self-talk.

What is positive self-talk?

Positive self-talk is a strategy that we can use to help us get through anxiety provoking situations. It helps us to break stress up and involves focusing on positive rather than negative statements. There are three key stages: preparation, coping, and review.

Preparation

As we are about to enter a situation or face something that we find daunting, we can help ourselves to prepare with positive statements such as:

"It's not going to be as bad as I think."

"It won't last long and I can cope."

"I am getting better and need to re-build my confidence."

"If I do get bad feelings, I know they won't last long and I can cope with them."

"It's better to go than not to go. Worry doesn't help."

"I might enjoy it if I go."

Coping

In order to help us cope and stay in the situation, we can use positive statements such as:

"Concentrate on what is going on....not how I feel."

"This is just anxiety; it is an unpleasant feeling, but I've never been ill."

"Concentrate on what I have to do."

"I know I am going to be OK."

"The feelings always pass."

"Relax and think positively."

"One step at a time."

"Anxious feelings are unpleasant, but not harmful or dangerous."

Review

Comments to help you review your achievement and give yourself praise:

"I coped with that."

"I achieved that; I am getting better."

"I handled that; it should be easier next time."

"I can be pleased with the progress I'm making."

"I did that well."

"If I keep this up, I'm going to get really good at this."

Even when things don't go according to plan, you should still take time to review the situation and praise yourself for what you have achieved. Each small step is progress, so try to focus on the positives rather than the negatives.

Here are some additional examples of self-talk statements for you to use. Pick a few to practice.

A. Preparation for Stress

I've succeeded with this before.
What exactly do I have to do?
I know I can do each one of these tasks.
It's easier once I get started.
I'll jump in and be alright.
Tomorrow I'll be through it.
I won't let negative thoughts creep in.

B. Facing a Challenge

I will take it step by step; I won't rush.
I can do this; I'm doing it now.
I can only do my best.
Any tension I feel is a signal to use my coping exercises.
I can get help if I need it.
If I don't think about fear, I won't be afraid.
If I get tense, I'll take a deep breath and relax.
It's OK to make mistakes.

C. Coping with Fear

Relax now!
Just breathe deeply.
There's an end to it.
Keep my mind on right now—on the task at hand.
I can keep this within limits I can handle.
I can always call _____
I am only afraid because I decided to be. I can decide not to be.
I've survived this and worse before.
Being active will lessen my fear.

D. Self-Congratulations

I did it!
I did alright.
I did well.
Next time, I won't have to worry so much.

I am able to relax away anxiety.

I've got to tell _____ about this.

It's possible not to be scared.

All I have to do is stop thinking I'm scared.

E. Affirmations

Every day in every way I grow stronger and stronger.

I enter this day with a peaceful heart.

Replace Negative Thoughts with Positive Thoughts (Positive Affirmations)

These are some examples of positive affirmations. These statements can help students fight their negative thoughts. Affirmations can help when students are thinking negative thoughts or even when they are not thinking negatively. Affirmations work better and faster the more times a student says them. Students may say these affirmations to themselves several times daily, or they may post them around their house so they can look at them until they sink in. If students do not like these affirmations, encourage them to create their own.

1. I am responsible and in control of my life.
2. Circumstances are what they are, but I can choose my attitude towards them.
3. I am becoming prosperous.
4. I am creating the financial resources I need.
5. I am setting priorities and making time for what is important.
6. Life has its challenges and its satisfactions; I enjoy the adventure of life.
7. Every challenge that comes along is an opportunity for me to learn and to grow.
8. I accept the natural ups and down of life.
9. I love and accept myself the way I am.
10. I deserve the good things in my life as much as anyone else.
11. I am open to discovering new meaning in my life.
12. It's never too late to change.
13. I am improving one step at a time.
14. I am innately healthy, strong, and capable of recovering.
15. I am getting better every day.
16. I am committed to overcoming my condition.
17. I am working on recovering from my condition.
18. I can recover by taking small risks at my own pace.
19. I am looking forward to the new freedom and opportunities I'll have when I've recovered.
20. I am learning to love myself.
21. I am learning to be comfortable by myself.
22. If someone doesn't return my love, I let it go and move on.
23. I am learning to be at peace with myself when alone.
24. I am learning how to enjoy when alone.
25. I respect and believe in myself apart from others' opinions.
26. I can accept and learn from constructive criticism.
27. I am learning to be myself around others.
28. It's important to take care of my own needs.
29. It's okay to be myself around others.
30. I appreciate my achievements and I'm much more than all of them put together.
31. I am learning how to balance work and play in my life.
32. I am learning that there is more to life than success.
33. The greatest success is living well.
34. I am a unique and capable person just as I am.
35. I am proud of doing the best I can.
36. It's okay to make mistakes.

37. I am willing to accept my mistakes and to learn from them.
38. I am willing to allow others to help me.
39. I acknowledge my need for other people.
40. I am open to receiving support from others.
41. I am willing to take the risk of getting close to someone.
42. I am willing to relax and to let go.
43. I am learning to accept those things I can't control.

Replacement Thoughts

Instead of Thinking	Try Thinking
Must	Prefer
Should	Choose to
Have to	Want
Can't	Choose not to
Ought	Had better
All	Many
Always	Often
Can't stand	Don't like
Awful	Highly undesirable
Bad person	Bad behavior
I am a failure	I failed at

Instead of Saying	Exchange With
I have to do well.	I want to do well.
You shouldn't do that.	I prefer you not do that.
You never help me.	You rarely help me.
I can't stand my job.	I don't like my job.
You are a bad boy.	That behavior is undesirable.
I'm a loser.	I failed at this one task.

Instead of Saying	Exchange With
Anxious	Concerned
Depressed	Sad
Angry	Annoyed
Guilt	Remorse
Shame	Regret
Hurt	Disappointed
Jealous	Concern for my relationship

Positive Self-Talk/Coping Thoughts Worksheet

Positive statements encourage us and help us cope through distressing times. We can say these encouraging words to ourselves and be our own personal coach. We have all survived some very distressing times, and we can use those experiences to encourage us through current difficulties.

Examples of coping thoughts might be:

- Stop and breathe; I can do this.
- This, too, will pass.
- I can be anxious/angry/sad and still deal with this.
- I have done this before, and I can do it again.
- This feels bad; however, it's a normal body reaction. It will pass.
- This feels bad, but feelings may sometimes be wrong.
- These are just feelings; they will go away.
- This won't last forever.
- Short term pain for long term gain.
- I can feel bad and still choose to take a new and healthy direction.
- I don't need to rush; I can take things slowly.
- I have survived before, so I will survive now.
- I feel this way because of my past experiences, but I am safe right now.
- It's okay to feel this way; it's a normal reaction.
- Right now, I am not in danger. Right now, I'm safe.
- My mind is not always my friend.
- Thoughts are just thoughts—they are not necessarily true or factual.
- This is difficult and uncomfortable, but it's only temporary.
- I can use my coping skills and get through this.
- I can learn from this and it will be easier next time.
- Keep calm and carry on.

Write down a coping thought or positive statement for each difficult or distressing situation—something you can tell yourself that will help you get through. Write them down on a piece of card and carry it in your pocket or handbag to help remind you.

Difficult or Distressing Thought	Coping Thought/Positive Statement
<i>Ex: I always feel so awkward around people.</i>	<i>Ex: Just because I feel awkward does not mean that others see me that way.</i>

