

### Did you know ...

You can learn to turn negative thinking into positive thinking. The process is simple, but it does take time and practice — you're creating a new habit, after all. Here are some ways to think and behave in a more positive and optimistic way:

- **Identify areas to change.** If you want to become more optimistic and engage in more positive thinking, first identify areas of your life that you usually think negatively about, whether it's work, your daily commute or a relationship. You can start small by focusing on one area to approach in a more positive way.
- **Check yourself.** Periodically during the day, stop and evaluate what you're thinking. If you find that your thoughts are mainly negative, try to find a way to put a positive spin on them.
- **Be open to humor.** Give yourself permission to smile or laugh, especially during difficult times. Seek humor in everyday happenings. When you can laugh at life, you feel less stressed.
- **Follow a healthy lifestyle.** Aim to exercise for about 30 minutes on most days of the week. You can also break it up into 10-minute chunks of time during the day. Exercise can positively affect mood and reduce stress. Follow a healthy diet to fuel your mind and body. And learn techniques to manage stress.
- **Surround yourself with positive people.** Make sure those in your life are positive, supportive people you can depend on to give helpful advice and feedback. Negative people may increase your stress level and make you doubt your ability to manage stress in healthy ways.
- **Practice positive self-talk.** Start by following one simple rule: Don't say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to anyone else. Be gentle and encouraging with yourself. If a negative thought enters your mind, evaluate it rationally and respond with affirmations of what is good about you. Think about things you're thankful for in your life.

What is the opposite of positive self talk? Here are four types of negative self talk:

- **Filtering** – this is when you focus on the negative aspects of a situation and ignore the positive. For example, you received a great mark on your paper. Your professor made one minor suggestion for improvement. Negative self-talk will forget about the successful mark and focus only on the comment from the professor about how to improve. The positive is forgotten.
- **Personalizing** – when something bad happens, you automatically blame yourself. Your friend cancels dinner plans and you automatically assume it's because he doesn't like you.
- **Catastrophizing** – you automatically anticipate the worst. Tim Horton's gets your breakfast order wrong and you automatically assume the rest of the day will be a disaster.
- **Polarizing** – you see things only as good or bad. There is no middle ground. You either have to be perfect or you are a total failure.

Here are some examples of negative self-talk and how you can apply a positive thinking twist to them:

Putting positive thinking into practice:

<b>Negative Self-Talk</b>	<b>Positive Thinking</b>
I have never done it before	It's an opportunity to learn something new
It's too complicated	I'll tackle it from a different angle.
I don't have the resources.	Necessity is the mother of invention
I am too lazy to get this done.	I wasn't able to fit it into my schedule but can re-examine some priorities
There's no way it will work	I can try to make it work.
It's too radical a change	Let's take a chance.
No one bothers to commutate with me.	I'll see if I can ask some questions and get information.
I am not going to get any better at this.	I'll give it another try. I couldn't do worse.

What are some of your negative self-talk?

<b>Negative Self-Talk</b>	<b>Positive Thinking</b>

Adapted from: [www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management](http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management)