

Working Through Self-Criticism

We all experience an inner voice, but sometimes this voice doesn't feel like it's on our side. Thoughts of self-criticism can be automatic and, when they remain unchallenged, impact our mental health. Use this worksheet to work through your thoughts of self-criticism and challenge them.

Example

What thought did you have?

- "I'm not good enough, I can't do anything right."

How does this thought make you feel? Based on this, does the thought seem positive or negative about yourself?

- I didn't feel good, I was already upset about the situation, but I just felt worse at this thought
- This thought was definitely negative

Looking at the thought, what evidence do you have for and against this thought? Try describing what was happening, but try to remain factual, what was actually happening?

- I was cleaning and accidentally dropped an item and it broke
- For the thought — I did make a mistake and break something when I was just trying to help out more by getting ahead and cleaning
- Against the thought — it was an accident and I have done things right before

Look at what could be negative about the situation — what is the worst thing that could happen? Is it as bad as you think it is?

- My roommate gets angry about me breaking the item
- It might not be as bad as I think (it was just an accident and accidents do happen, it can also be replaced)



Look at what could be positive about the situation — what is the best thing that could happen? What good is there in this situation?

- I'm finding it difficult to find a positive, but there are actions I could take to try to fix it a little

If your thought was catered towards your character — does this seem like an accurate representation of you when you picture yourself? What about if a friend was picturing you?

- The thought was a bit harsh and this doesn't seem like an accurate representation of who I am
- I don't always mess things up and I can do well at things

Is there another way to look at this situation outside of the self-critical voice? It can be difficult sometimes to put this voice aside, if you're struggling with this, think about if a friend or loved one were in your position. What would you say to them about the situation and their thoughts?

- Accidents happen and it isn't a reflection of who I am or what I'm capable of
- Even when I try to do something that's positive and something negative happens, it doesn't reflect on my capabilities to be helpful to others

Going forward, if you have a thought like this, what are some things you can say to yourself to challenge it?

- Instead of thinking "I'm not good enough, I can't do anything right," I will say
 - I'm good at a lot of things and list a few ideas
 - Mistakes happen, I'm human, I'm allowed to not be perfect
 - Just because I was trying to do something good and something happened, it doesn't mean I'm incapable of doing good
 - An accident or mistake is not a reflection of who I am
 - This is my self-critical voice talking right now, and this does not make the thought true



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Looking at the thought, what evidence do you have for and against this thought? Try describing what was happening, but try to remain factual, what was actually happening?

Look at what could be negative about the situation — what is the worst thing that could happen? Is it as bad as you think it is?

Look at what could be positive about the situation — what is the best thing that could happen? What good is there in this situation?



If your thought was catered towards your character — does this seem like an accurate representation of you when you picture yourself? What about if a friend was picturing you?

Is there another way to look at this situation outside of the self-critical voice? It can be difficult sometimes to put this voice aside, if you're struggling with this, think about if a friend or loved one were in your position. What would you say to them about the situation and their thoughts?

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