

Positive Thought Replacement Handout

All or Nothing Thinking: Seeing things as either/or with no middle ground.

- Negative thought: Because my child misbehaved today, he must be a defiant kid.
- Replacement thought: He is a good kid who seems to be having a rough time at the moment.

Assuming the Worst: Exaggerating the importance of an event or outcome.

- Negative thought: If this birthday party doesn't go smoothly, I have failed my family.
- Replacement thought: Even when I do my best, things happen that are not in my control. When it doesn't turn out the way I want it to be, I have still learned a few things that I can use to do better next time.

Negative Filter: Tendency to emphasize one or more negative events while ignoring positive experiences and evidence to the contrary.

- Negative thought: Since my wife is upset with me today, we must have a bad marriage.
- Replacement thought: Our marriage has been through rough patches before and then improved. Sometimes the rough patches show the way toward a better relationship.

Taking Things Too Personally: Feeling that you are the cause of a negative event for which you were not responsible.

- Negative thought: He's not talking to me and seems upset. I must have done something wrong.
- Replacement thought: There are many possible reasons for this behavior and a lot of them have nothing to do with me. He might even blame me for the way he's feeling, even though it's not me. Let me see if I can understand what has been happening to him lately.

Should Statements: Having a fixed idea of how things must occur or how people should behave.

- Negative thought: I should be able to do this without help.
- Replacement thought: No one is capable of functioning perfectly at all times. We can set ideals for ourselves but they are ideals and not really attainable.

Labeling: Putting a fixed and overgeneralized label on self or others.

- Negative thought: I am such a terrible father.
- Replacement thought: Yes, I forgot his soccer game today, but that doesn't make me a bad parent. Even good parents forget some things.