A close-up photograph of a hand holding a silver pen, writing on a lined notebook. The notebook is open, and the pen is positioned over the lines. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting. A semi-transparent green overlay covers the middle portion of the image, where the title text is placed.

**COPING
SKILLS
WORKBOOK
FOR
TEENS**

99 Coping Skills

1. Exercise (running, walking, etc.).
2. Put on fake tattoos.
3. Write (poetry, stories, journal).
4. Scribble/doodle on paper.
5. Be with other people.
6. Watch a favorite TV show.
7. Post on web boards, and answer others' posts.
8. Go see a movie.
9. Do a wordsearch or crossword .
10. Do schoolwork.
11. Play a musical instrument.
12. Paint your nails, do your make-up or hair.
13. Sing.
14. Study the sky.
15. Punch a punching bag.
16. Cover yourself with Band-Aids where you want to cut.
17. Let yourself cry.
18. Take a nap (only if you are tired).
19. Take a hot shower or relaxing bath.
20. Play with a pet.
21. Go shopping.
22. Clean something.
23. Knit or sew.
24. Read a good book.
25. Listen to music.
26. Try some aromatherapy (candle, lotion, room spray).
27. Meditate.
28. Go somewhere very public.
29. Bake cookies.
30. Alphabetize your CDs/DVDs/books.
31. Paint or draw.
32. Rip paper into itty-bitty pieces
33. Shoot hoops, kick a ball.
34. Write a letter or send an email.
35. Plan your dream room (colors/ furniture).
36. Hug a pillow or stuffed animal.
37. Hyperfocus on something like a rock, hand, etc.
38. Dance.
39. Make hot chocolate, milkshake or smoothie.
40. Play with modeling clay or Play-Dough.
41. Build a pillow fort.
42. Go for a nice, long drive.
43. Complete something you've been putting off.
44. Draw on yourself with a marker.
45. Take up a new hobby.
46. Look up recipes, cook a meal.
47. Look at pretty things, like flowers or art.
48. Create or build something.
49. Pray.
50. Make a list of blessings in your life.
51. Read the Bible.
52. Go to a friend's house.
53. Jump on a trampoline.
54. Watch an old, happy movie.
55. Contact a hotline/ your therapist.
56. Talk to someone close to you.
57. Ride a bicycle.
58. Feed the ducks, birds, or squirrels.
59. Color with Crayons.
60. Memorize a poem, play, or song.
61. Stretch.
62. Search for ridiculous things on the internet.
63. "Shop" on-line (without buying anything).
64. Color-coordinate your wardrobe.
65. Watch fish.
66. Make a CD/playlist of your favorite songs.
67. Play the "15 minute game." (Avoid something for 15 minutes, when time is up start again.)
68. Plan your wedding/prom/other event.
69. Plant some seeds.
70. Hunt for your perfect home or car on-line.
71. Try to make as many words out of your full name as possible .
72. Sort through your photographs.
73. Play with a balloon.
74. Give yourself a facial.
75. Find yourself some toys and play.
76. Start collecting something.
77. Play video/computer games.
78. Clean up trash at your local park.
79. Perform a random act of kindness for someone.
80. Text or call an old friend.
81. Write yourself an "I love you because..." letter.
82. Look up new words and use them.
83. Rearrange furniture.
84. Write a letter to someone that you may never send.
85. Smile at least five people.
86. Play with little kids.
87. Go for a walk (with or without a friend).
88. Put a puzzle together.
89. Clean your room /closet.
90. Try to do handstands, cartwheels, or backbends.
91. Yoga.
92. Teach your pet a new trick.
93. Learn a new language.
94. Move EVERYTHING in your room to a new spot.
95. Get together with friends and play Frisbee, soccer or basketball.
96. Hug a friend or family member.
97. Search on-line for new songs/ artists.
98. Make a list of goals for the week/ month/year/5 years.
99. Face paint.

STRESS THINKING TRAPS FOR TEENS



MIND READING: You assume you know what people thinking without having evidence or proof of their thoughts. "He thinks I'm an idiot." "I'm not going to make the team"

FUTURE TELLING: You predict the future – that things will get worse or that there's danger ahead. "If I go, people will make fun of me." "If I talk, I will mess up and not say what I mean."



CATASTROPHIZING: You believe what might happen will be so awful and unbearable that you won't be able to stand it. "It would be terrible if I failed." "If I make a bad grade then I will never get into a good college."

LABELING: You assign general negative traits to yourself and others. "I'm disgusting." "He's horrible." "She's irrelevant."



DISCOUNTING THE POSITIVES: You claim that the positives that you or others have don't matter. "That's what I'm supposed to do, so it doesn't count." "Those successes were easy so they don't matter."

NEGATIVE FILTER: You focus almost exclusively on the negatives and seldom notice the positives. "Look at all the terrible things on the news." "Girls never have anything nice to say."



OVERGENERALISING: You perceive the likelihood of a negative outcome based upon a single incident. "I fail all the time."

ALL OR NOTHING THINKING: You view events or people in all-or-none/black-and-white terms. "It was a waste of time." "I get rejected by everyone." "Nothing ever goes my way."



SHOULDs: You interpret events in terms of how things should be rather than simply focusing on what is. "I should do well; if I don't, I'm a failure." "My friends should include me."



PERSONALIZING: You attribute a most of the blame to yourself for negative events and fail to see that certain situations are also caused by others. "My relationship ended because I wasn't fun enough." "It was my fault my group got a bad grade." "I'm the reason my parents divorced."



BLAMING: You focus on the other person as the source of your negative feelings and refuse to take responsibility for changing yourself. "She's to blame for the way I feel." "My parents cause all my problems." "My teacher is the reason I'm not doing well."



JUDGEMENT FOCUS: You view yourself, others, and events in terms of evaluations of "good" and "bad" or "right" and "wrong" rather than simply describing, accepting, or understanding. "I didn't perform well." "I tried it, and I just kept doing it wrong." "Look how successful she is, I'm not that successful."

REGRET ORIENTATION: You focus on the idea that you could have done better in the past, rather than on what you can do better now. "I could have had a better job if I had tried harder." "I shouldn't have said that." "I always mess up."



WHAT IF: You keep asking a series of questions about what if something happens, and fail to be satisfied with any of the answers. "Yeah, but what if I get anxious, and I can't catch my breath."

EMOTIONAL REASONING: You let your feelings guide your interpretation of reality. "I feel sad, therefore I must be depressed." "I feel anxious, therefore I must be in danger."



INABILITY TO DISCONFIRM: You reject any evidence or arguments that might contradict your negative thoughts. "I'm unlovable – my friends hang out with me only because they must feel sorry for me." "I'm a bad person – I only help others because it makes me feel better about myself."

UNFAIR COMPARISONS: You interpret events in terms of standards that are unrealistic. "Others did better than I did on the test." "People my age are more successful than I am."



CHALLENGE YOUR ANXIOUS THOUGHTS

Anxious feelings can come from a misinterpreted threat of danger along with thoughts that you might not be able to control the situation

PERCEIVED THREAT

Assuming something or someone is going to hurt you



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HELPLESSNESS THOUGHTS

Assuming you will have no way to help or protect yourself

FEELINGS OF ANXIETY

Believing that you will be hurt by someone or something

1) What am I afraid might happen?

2) Why I think I can't handle it?

3) Why I am not in real danger?

4) What I can do to protect myself?

5) What is a more helpful thought now?

Even though 1) _____ and 2) _____

The truth is 3) _____ and 4) _____

CHALLENGE YOUR WORRIED THOUGHTS

Our brains are hardwired to worry especially when it comes to dealing with uncertainty in life. Uncertainty is what fuels the fire of worry. As uncertainty grows, we feel the need to have total control over everything in their lives. Learning to let go of the "what ifs" of the past and future, help us to override thoughts of worry and shift their mind in a more rational direction.

UNCERTAINTY

A state of doubt about the future, making mistakes, or what is the right thing to do.



THOUGHTS OF "WHAT IF"

Irrational fears of something catastrophic happening in the future or anxieties that we did something wrong in the past.



Answer the "WHAT IF" questions with an alternative action plan



1. What if no one talks to me? Then I will initiate conversation
2. What if they don't call me back? _____
3. What if I make a mistake? _____
4. What if they get mad at me? _____
5. What if I am left out? _____
6. What if I get angry? _____
7. What if I need help? _____
8. What if I fail? _____
9. What if they don't like me? _____
10. What if I get my heart broken? _____
11. What if they laugh at me? _____
12. What if I have a panic attack? _____
13. What if I get lost? _____
14. What if I do something wrong? _____

CHALLENGE YOUR DEPRESSED THOUGHTS

Exaggerated or irrational beliefs that you keep to yourself

DISTORTED THOUGHTS
An untrue negative way of looking at yourself, other people, or your situations.

NOT TALKING ABOUT IT
Keeping the negative thoughts to yourself.

FEELINGS OF DEPRESSION
Believing that your negative thoughts are true.



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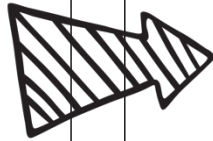


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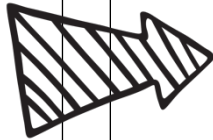
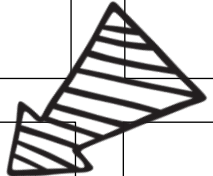
1) What is an unhelpful thought?

2) Who I keep my thoughts from.



3) What is a more helpful thought?

4) Why it will help to talk about them?



5) What is a more helpful thought now?

Even though 1) _____ and 2) _____

The truth is 3) _____ and 4) _____



CHANGE YOUR MINDSET

Some words we use can distort from the truth or facts of a situation; but when we examine the evidence, then the true meaning can reframe our mindset..

WHAT IF - What is a thought you have that includes, "what if?"

1. What is the evidence this will happen?

2. What is the worst-case scenario?

3. How would you cope if it happens?

4. Reframe the thought from a place of "I've got this..."

FAILED - What is a thought you have that includes, "failed."

1. What is the evidence this is not true?

2. What have I learned from this experience?

3. How am I a better person now?

4. Reframe the thought from a place of "I'm learning to..."

CAN'T - What is a thought you have that includes the word, "can't."

1. What is the evidence you can do it?

2. What steps can you take to help yourself?

3. Why will it help you to try this?

4. Reframe the thought from a place of "I will try to..."





ALWAYS - What is a thought you have that includes, "always."

1. What is the evidence this is not true?

2. What good experiences am I leaving out?

3. What would my best friend say?

4. Reframe the thought from a place of "Sometimes I..."

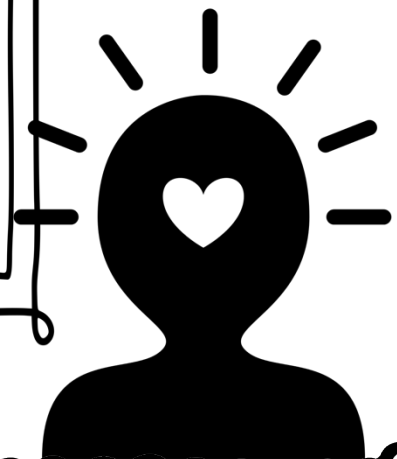
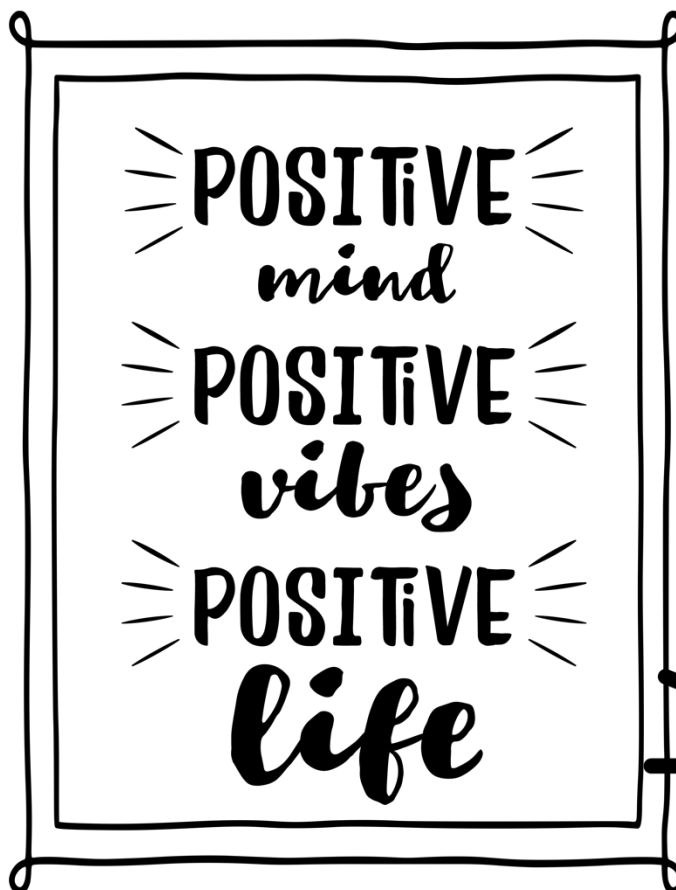
NEVER - What is a thought you have that includes, "never."

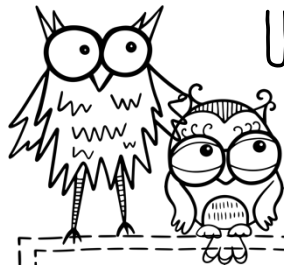
1. What is the evidence this is not true?

2. What good experiences am I leaving out?

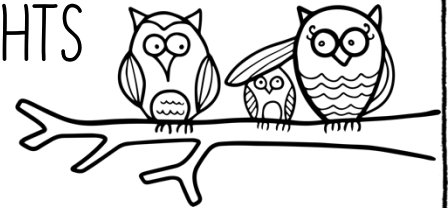
3. What would my best friend say?

4. Reframe the thought from a place of "I haven't yet..."






UNHELPFUL TO HELPFUL THOUGHTS



WHAT IF



I'VE GOT THIS

EVERYONE




SOME PEOPLE

UNFAIR




UNFORTUNATE

SHOULD NOT




I WOULD LIKE IT IF

FAILED



LEARNING

ALWAYS




SOMETIMES

HAVE TO




GET IT

DUMB




INEXPERIENCED

HATE




PERFER

WEIRD




DIFFIRENT

NEVER




YET

DESTROYED




SET BACK

MUST




TRY

CAN'T

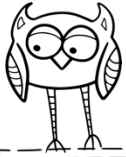


WILL TRY

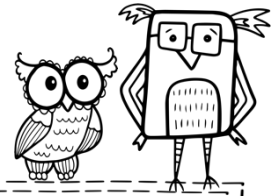
SHOULD



IT WOULD BE NICE



REPLACE THE UNHELPFUL WORD



HELPFUL



UNHELPFUL

1. WRITE A THOUGHT USING AN UNHELPFUL WORD - _____

2. HOW DOES THAT UNHELPFUL THOUGHT MAKE YOU FEEL? - _____

3. REWRITE A POSITIVE THOUGHT USING A MORE HELPFUL WORD - _____

4. HOW DOES THAT HELPFUL THOUGHT MAKE YOU FEEL? - _____

1. WRITE A THOUGHT USING AN UNHELPFUL WORD - _____

2. HOW DOES THAT UNHELPFUL THOUGHT MAKE YOU FEEL? - _____

3. REWRITE A POSITIVE THOUGHT USING A MORE HELPFUL WORD - _____

4. HOW DOES THAT HELPFUL THOUGHT MAKE YOU FEEL? - _____

FOR EXAMPLE:

"I HATE it when my friends leave me out" TO "I PERFER that my friends didn't leave me out."

"I can NEVER make an A on my math test" TO "I have YET to make an A on my math test."

"I ALWAYS get stressed when meeting people" TO "I SOMETIMES get stressed when meeting people"

WHAT IS YOUR THINKING PERSPECTIVE?

The brain helps us to interpret our experiences and make predictions about what is likely to happen in the future, our general perspective can have a strong impact.

Pessimism

- When I have an upcoming presentation or examination, I worry quite a bit and fear that I won't do well.
- I generally expect that if something can go wrong, it will.
- I'm often convinced that my anxiety will never end.
- When I hear that something unexpected has happened to someone, I typically imagine that it is something negative.
- I frequently prepare myself for negative events that I fear will occur, but which never do.
- If it weren't for bad luck, I wouldn't have any luck at all.
- Some people want to make the world a better place, but that seems pretty hopeless to me.
- Most people will let you down, so it's best not to expect too much.

Worry

- I am good at imagining all kinds of things that could go wrong in a specific situation.
- I sometimes worry that my symptoms are the result of some medical illness that has not been diagnosed yet.
- I know I tend to worry about trivial things.
- When I am busy (at work or at other activities), I don't have as much anxiety.
- Even when things are going well, I seem to think about what could go wrong.
- I sometimes feel that, if I don't worry about a specific situation, something will surely go wrong.
- Even if there is a small possibility that something negative could have happened, I tend to dwell on that possibility.
- I have trouble falling asleep because of my thoughts.

Obsessive Thinking

- I can spend a long time rehashing certain events in my mind.
- When I forget to do something, or I make some kind of mistake, it takes me a long time to come to terms with it.
- If a friend or relative disappoints me, it can take me months to get over being upset and return to a good relationship with the person.
- I can get very upset if I can't keep certain objects in order or good condition.
- I can become preoccupied with arranging, counting, or evening up things.
- I need to repeatedly check on things in order to reduce my anxiety, either by checking with people or inspecting something, like my stove.
- I tend to go over my mistakes or embarrassing moments in my mind, playing them over and over.
- Unpleasant thoughts or images frequently come into my mind and I can't get them out.

Perfectionism

- I have high standards for myself, and usually hold myself to them.
- I usually have a “right way” to do something, and it is difficult to vary from that approach.
- People consider me extremely conscientious and careful as a worker.
- When I am wrong, I am very embarrassed and ashamed.
- When others are watching me, I am concerned that I am going to humiliate myself.
- I almost never perform at a level that I am satisfied with.
- I have a hard time letting go of mistakes I make.
- I feel I have to be hard on myself, or I won’t be good enough.

Catastrophizing

- I often imagine the worst when I am thinking about how some situation might turn out.
- I can make a mountain out of a molehill.
- People would think I am going crazy if they knew the awful thoughts that go through my mind.
- I often feel as if I can’t handle one more thing going wrong.
- When something doesn’t turn out the way that I want it to, I find it difficult to cope.
- I admit that I overreact to problems that others would not consider so much of a concern.
- Even a small set back, like being stopped for a traffic light, can infuriate me.
- Sometimes what begins as a small doubt in my mind becomes an overwhelming, negative thought as I dwell on it.

Guilt and Shame

- I frequently feel that I am not measuring up to what I expect of myself.
- I become very concerned when I contemplate not doing something that I feel I “should” do.
- I frequently worry about disappointing people and have trouble saying no.
- If a friend is very upset when I don’t come to an event, I may feel guilty for days. r It feels awful to know I have let someone down.
- It is easy for others to guilt me into doing what they want.
- It’s very hard to admit and discuss my mistakes with others.
- Once a person criticizes me, I tend to avoid spending much time around that person.

Right Hemisphere-Based Anxiety

- I picture potential problem situations in my mind, imagining various ways things could go wrong and how others will react.
- I can practically hear what people will say that will upset me. r I tend to imagine ways that people will criticize or reject me. r I can just feel people judging me at times.
- I’m good at imagining gory things.
- I am very sensitive to the tone of people’s voices.
- I sometimes see images of terrible events occurring.
- I am watchful of people’s body language and pick up on subtle cues.

Mind Traps

| NEGATIVE THOUGHT | MIND TRAP | POSITIVE THOUGHT |
|---|--|---|
| I got into trouble at school today. I just know they're going to kick me out tomorrow. | Jumping to Conclusions (Fortune-Telling) (also a bit of Catastrophizing) | I did something at school today that I'm not proud of, but everyone makes mistakes and it's not the end of the world! I'll try harder not to make the same mistake again. |
| My friend looked at his watch when I was talking today. He must think I'm boring. | Personification | I can't know for certain why my friend looked at his watch when I was talking. If he thought I was boring, he probably wouldn't come over to talk to me everyday! |
| I got an award at the assembly yesterday, but that's no big deal. I'm not really that good of a student. | Minimizing Positives | I worked really hard to get that award! My hard work definitely paid off! |
| If I don't get a date to the homecoming dance, there's no way I could ever go back to school and face my friends! | Catastrophizing | It would be really difficult not to get a date to the dance, but I could still go with my friends and have a good time. Maybe there'll be other people there without dates too! |
| There's no way I could ever be as talented as the star quarterback on the football team. I shouldn't even try. | Comparison | Our star quarterback is really talented! Even if I'm never quite as good as he is, it doesn't mean I shouldn't play. There are lots of other things I'm good at! |
| I only got a B on my reading test. I always fail. I shouldn't have even tried. | All-Or-Nothing | Even though a B isn't what I was hoping for on that test, it's still pretty good! Next time I could study even more and see if can do even better! |

More Mind Traps

| NEGATIVE THOUGHT | MIND TRAP | POSITIVE THOUGHT |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| I can't believe I gained 3 pounds. I'm so ugly. | Maximizing Negatives | Wow. I didn't realize I've gained 3 pounds, but that doesn't define all of who I am. I'll just make sure to get my exercise in 3 times this week and stop having soda with every meal. |
| My teacher didn't answer me when I said hello to her this morning. She's probably mad at me for something. | Jumping to Conclusions (Mind Reading) | My teacher didn't answer me when I said hello to her this morning. She might be upset with me, but I can't know that for sure unless she tells me so or I ask? Maybe she didn't hear me? |
| Another student called me a name once today. People are always making fun of me. | Overgeneralization | A student teased me today, but that's his problem! Lots of other people are friends with me. I don't need to dwell on one negative experience. |
| I must get all A+'s to be a good student. | Shoulds/Musts | I'm a good student as long as I do the best that I can and work hard each day. I don't have to be perfect. |
| I hate how I look, so I must look bad to everyone else too. | Emotional Reasoning | Just because there are some things, I don't like about my appearance doesn't mean everyone feels that way! No one is perfect! |

Mind Trap Examples

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>I got into trouble at school today. I just know they're going to kick me out tomorrow.</p> | <p>Jumping to Conclusions (Fortune-Telling)</p> <p>(also a bit of Catastrophizing)</p> | <p>I did something at school today that I'm not proud of, but everyone makes mistakes and it's not the end of the world! I'll try harder not to make the same mistake again.</p> |
| <p>My friend looked at his watch when I was talking today. He must think I'm boring.</p> | <p>Personification</p> | <p>I can't know for certain why my friend looked at his watch when I was talking. If he thought I was boring, he probably wouldn't come over to talk to me everyday!</p> |
| <p>I got an award at the assembly yesterday, but that's no big deal. I'm not really that good of a student.</p> | <p>Minimizing Positives</p> | <p>I worked really hard to get that award! My hard work definitely paid off!</p> |
| <p>If I don't get a date to the homecoming dance, there's no way I could ever go back to school and face my friends!</p> | <p>Catastrophizing</p> | <p>It would be really difficult not to get a date to the dance, but I could still go with my friends and have a good time. Maybe there'll be other people there without dates too!</p> |
| <p>There's no way I could ever be as talented as the star quarterback on the football team. I shouldn't even try.</p> | <p>Comparison</p> | <p>Our star quarterback is really talented! Even if I'm never quite as good as he is, it doesn't mean I shouldn't play. There are lots of other things I'm good at!</p> |
| <p>I only got a B on my reading test. I always fail. I shouldn't have even tried.</p> | <p>All-Or-Nothing</p> | <p>Even though a B isn't what I was hoping for on that test, it's still pretty good! Next time I could study even more and see if I can do even better!</p> |

WORKING THROUGH OVERTHINKING

1) What are you OVERTHINKING about?

2) Identify the THINKING TRAP

- All-or-Nothing Thinking
- Overgeneralizing
- Discounting the Positive
- Jumping to Conclusions
- Mind Reading
- Fortune Telling
- Catastrophizing
- Emotional Reasoning
- Should Statements
- Labeling and Mislabeled Personalization

3) Walk it through THINKING TRAP: -

If the thought is true, why is it so bad?

Then what will happen?

Then what will happen?

4) Examine all the FACTS...what is the EVIDENCE

Why is the negative thought TRUE?

Why is the negative thought NOT TRUE?

WORKING THROUGH OVERTHINKING

5) Thinking in SHADES OF GREY

In reality, what percentage is the negative thought really true?

_____ %

6) The REALITY CHECK

What is another way of looking at the situation?

What facts am I leaving out from my negative conclusion?

7) The DOUBLE STANDARD

What would you tell your BEST FRIEND if they had this negative thought?

8) The FEAR FACTOR

What is the WORST CASE SENERIO?

How could you handle the WORST CAST SENERIO?

9) ALTERNATIVES

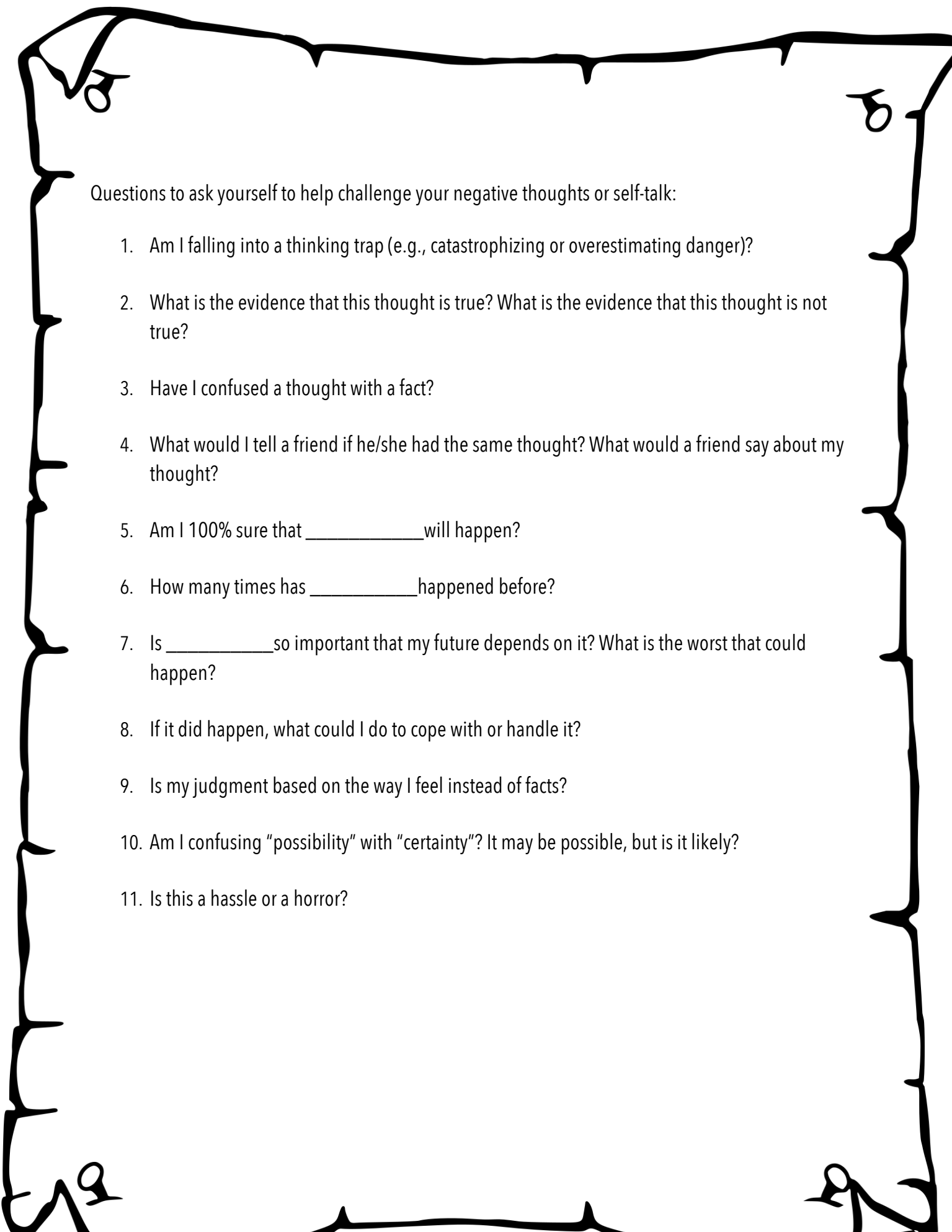
What words could you REPLACE?

10) TURN-AROUNDS

How can you TURN-IT-AROUND to a more helpful thought?

CHALLENGING MY UNHELPFUL THOUGHTS

1. What idea have I strongly and persistently held that I now realize to be the cause of many problems – emotional or otherwise – in my life?
 2. What's wrong with this idea? What makes it unrealistic, extreme, illogical and/or unreasonable?
 3. How does this idea push me and others around? What are the consequences of doggedly holding on to this idea?
 4. Is it helping me get what I want or hurting me?
 5. Is there any proof to support this irrational and/or unhelpful idea?
 6. Imagine that I'm trying to convince another person why it doesn't make sense to think that way; what persuasive counterarguments would convince him or her?
- Note to myself: I will try to notice when this old unhelpful idea seems to be at the root of some new distress. I will regularly read what I've written on this sheet to help myself think more clearly, feel better, and act more wisely.



Questions to ask yourself to help challenge your negative thoughts or self-talk:

1. Am I falling into a thinking trap (e.g., catastrophizing or overestimating danger)?
2. What is the evidence that this thought is true? What is the evidence that this thought is not true?
3. Have I confused a thought with a fact?
4. What would I tell a friend if he/she had the same thought? What would a friend say about my thought?
5. Am I 100% sure that _____ will happen?
6. How many times has _____ happened before?
7. Is _____ so important that my future depends on it? What is the worst that could happen?
8. If it did happen, what could I do to cope with or handle it?
9. Is my judgment based on the way I feel instead of facts?
10. Am I confusing "possibility" with "certainty"? It may be possible, but is it likely?
11. Is this a hassle or a horror?

STOPPING THOSE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

By E.J. Bourne

When I feel bad, it is hard to stop all my negative thoughts from taking over. The more I think the negative thoughts, the worse I feel. It becomes a vicious cycle, one that can be extremely hard to break free from.

But there is a way to stop it before it gets too far. I can take steps to change things. I can stop these negative thoughts from taking over my life. I can choose to be in control of my life.

Thought Stopping in Three Basic Steps

1. Notice

I cannot change something if I am not aware it is happening. The first step is to realize that I am thinking negatively while I am doing it. This may take time as negative thinking has likely become a habit I do without knowing it. It can help to ask people around me to point out when I say negative things to myself. I may only realize I have done it after the negative thoughts are done and have made me feel bad. At first, as I start paying attention to my negative thoughts, I may even feel worse. I may feel really bad when I see just how much negative thinking I do. That is okay! I know that once I start noticing my negative thinking, I can begin to work on changing it.

2. Stop

The best way to break the negative thinking habit is to do something that will take both my thoughts and my mind by surprise. Examples include: yelling something in my head (such as "stop!!" or "get out of my head!!"), snapping my wrist gently with an elastic band, or tapping my head. These actions help because they break the negative thought cycle my mind is so used to. I think of the negative thought pattern as a deep groove in the brain. It will take something drastic to get my mind out of this deep rut. If the action does not work, I will try again. It will take a lot of tries before it works really well. Once I have done it, I am able to begin a newer, healthier thought pattern (of my own choosing).

3. Do Something Different

This is where I create a newer, healthier pattern of my own choice.

A. Analyze Thoughts:

How true and helpful your negative thoughts are to your well-being
I don't have to accept my negative thoughts as ultimate truths. Analyzing my negative thoughts can help me see that what I think isn't necessarily true. Also, those negative thoughts are most likely not good for my well-being. Once I see these thoughts as both not true and bad for me, it is easier to leave them behind.

B. Replace Negative Thoughts with Positive Thoughts

Saying positive statements about myself can help me battle the negative thoughts. They can even help me feel good about myself. These positive statements are called affirmations. Keeping a journal of my affirmations or of nice things others have said to me can remind me

about good things when I can't think of them myself. Placing post its around my home with positive sayings can also help. This way I am surrounded by positive thoughts even when I feel down. With enough repetition, I can begin to believe the good things I say to myself. After all, it's usually the same way I started thinking so negatively about myself.

C. Relax

Doing something relaxing can make me feel physically better. This can then help calm my mind and prevent the negative thoughts from taking over. After all, it is hard to think negatively when my body is at peace. I find deep breathing helps me to stop the thoughts. I start concentrating on my breath and leave the thoughts alone and find that helps them go away.

D. Distract Yourself

I find (especially at first) that the best strategy is to simply do something/anything. For example, I can count my pennies (nickels, dimes), or do the dishes, etc. This occupies my mind so I cannot dwell on the negative thoughts as much. It's hard to obsess over negative things when I keep busy. How much something will distract me depends on my mood. If I keep trying new activities, I will find what I can do that is most helpful for me in stopping the negative thoughts.

If it works, keep it! If it doesn't work, try something new!

It is MY choice whether I want to continue engaging in the same behaviors (including thinking negatively) or try new ones. One of the best things to do is examine what I currently do and how it makes me feel. If what I am doing doesn't make me happy, maybe it's time for a change.

I REMEMBER, thought stopping is a process and it takes time. It took a long time for me to say and believe the negative thoughts in my head, so it will take time to stop them. At first, all I may be able to do is notice that I am thinking negatively and nothing may distract me from it. This is okay. It will take time, like any new behaviour I engage in, it will get easier and be more effective the more I do it. As long as I keep trying, I am getting better.

Analyzing My Negative Thoughts

It is very easy to believe the negative things I tell myself when I feel upset. It is also easy to believe positive things when I feel good about myself. This shows how my thinking changes with how I feel in the moment. Questioning my negative thoughts when I feel upset can help free me from their tight grip on my life. I use the following questions to help me question my negative thinking.

I find it helpful to write down the process of questioning my negative thoughts. This helps me remember what I was thinking when I was in a different mood. It shows me I don't always think bad about myself, which gives me hope when I feel upset. It can also help remind me of reasons why I may have already decided the negative thought was not true or helpful. This can make it much easier to stop that thought when it creeps up on me again.

1. What is the evidence for this thought?

I may say really horrible things about myself without questioning it. When I actually start looking for proof for the thought/belief, I may be surprised to find I have nothing to back it up. I may even find proof for why the thought is not true. Realizing the thought is not true means when it comes up, I can remind myself "I know this is not true" and say all the reasons it is not true. This can help the thought go away.

2. Is this thought always true?

It is very easy to believe negative thoughts when I am upset and believe positive thoughts when I am happy. However, how can two extreme opposites both be true? For example, "I have no friends" and "Sarah and Katie are my good friends". If I only believe it some of the time, it is likely not true. It is likely my thoughts just trying to make me feel bad. I can remind myself of this when the negative thought comes around again.

3. Has this thought been true in the past?

Again, if I did not believe a negative thing about myself in the past, why should I believe it now? Most likely, I only believe it because I am feeling worse now. When I feel better, I will be able to go back to my healthier beliefs. I choose to confront the negative thought now and get back to my healthier beliefs sooner.

4. What are the odds of this thought really being true?

I ask myself if I would hold anyone else up to the same standards I set for myself. For example, "if I do not skip my lunches at work, ignore my coworkers, and stare at the computer screen all day long, I am not a good worker". I tend to treat others more kindly and fairly than I treat myself. If I would not talk to or think this way about others, then the thought is likely not true.

5. Am I looking at the whole picture?

When I feel bad, it is very easy to only look at the negatives and to ignore any positives. When I push aside the positives, I am choosing to think negatively. Positives are just as valid as negatives, even though when I feel bad, I may feel they are undeserved. I remember that is the negative thoughts and feelings talking. I can choose to feel better by choosing to believe in the positives. I remember to look in my journal where I write nice things others have said about me. Other people think good things about me, so there must be good things there. I can start to see the positives if I let myself look for them.

6. Am I being fully objective?

Asking someone else for their opinion can help me to clarify whether I am being realistic or not. They can tell me if there is any truth to the thoughts or if I am only making myself feel worse. Talking to others also helps me see that other people have the same worries as me. They may even be able to share ideas on how they stop their negative thoughts. Then I can try those ideas out and they may help me. We can even work together and help each other out.

7. Does the thought promote my well-being?

I know that most often, the negative thoughts I have don't do anything good for me. Sometimes I think they may motivate me to do better. What usually happens is I feel too bad with all the negative thoughts to do anything to feel better. If the negative thoughts don't do anything good for me, I can choose to leave them behind. I will replace them with healthier thoughts.

8. Did I choose the thought on my own?

Often with my negative thoughts, I have no idea where they come from. Maybe someone told me negative things about myself or someone treated me poorly. I might have thought bad things about myself to explain why I was treated poorly. I want to be able to choose what I believe about myself. I look at my whole self and decide what I want to believe about myself and what thoughts I want to tell myself. I do have this power and my choices can make a world of difference.

Once I have questioned my negative thoughts, it is MY choice to keep them or not. If I want, I can decide to eliminate them from my life by working on my thought stopping. If I want to think more healthy thoughts, repeating positive statements to

myself helps. Examples of these positive statements, or affirmations, are listed on the next pages.

Replace Negative Thoughts with Positive Thoughts

These are some examples of positive affirmations. These statements can help me fight my negative thoughts. Affirmations can help when I am thinking negative thoughts or even when I am not thinking negatively. Affirmations work better and faster the more times I say them. I say them to myself several times daily or post them around my house so I can look at them until they sink in. If I do not like these affirmations, I create my own!

1. I am responsible and in control of my life.
2. Circumstances are what they are, but I can choose my attitude toward 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 grow.
8. I accept the natural ups and downs 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 paces.
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 myself 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 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 let go.
43. I am learning to accept those things I can't control.

NEGATIVE THOUGHT TURN AROUNDS

How do I know if this thought is accurate?

What evidence do I have to support this thought or belief?

How can I test my assumptions/beliefs to find out if they're accurate?

Do I have a trusted friend who I can check out these thoughts with?

Is this thought helpful?

Are there other ways that I can think about this situation or myself?

Am I blaming myself unnecessarily?

What or who else contributed to this situation?

Is it really in my control?

Am I overgeneralizing?

Am I making assumptions?

What would I say to a friend in this situation?

Can I look for "shades of gray"?

Am I assuming the worst?

Am I holding myself to an unreasonable or double standard?

Are there exceptions to these absolutes (always, never)?

Am I making this personal when it isn't?



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 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, it's a normal body reaction - it will pass
- This feels bad, and feelings are very often 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, 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're 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> |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Learning to be G.L.A.D.

G- Something you were grateful for today.

Think of something very basic you are grateful for. It could be something as simple as the sunlight or the nourishing food you eat. Write it below.

Now think of something truly important in your life like a meaningful relationship, kids, friends, or your health. Write it below.

L-Something you learned today.

Write down something positive you learned about yourself today. It might be something you already knew, but it came into focus today.

Write down something you learned about another person today. Again, it might be something you were already aware of, but you were more aware of this quality today.

Write down a fact you learned today that made you curious or more aware of the world around you.

Write down how something you learned today which changed your perspective of yourself or the world around you in a positive way.

A-One small accomplishment you did today.

Many people feel that accomplishments have to be a big important tasks, but it's the little things that make a difference in your life. Perhaps you are working on a goal like exercising more or eating healthier or finding a new job. Small steps towards your goal are important accomplishments.

Write down something you accomplished today.

D-Something that brought you delight today.

What made you laugh or smile?

What small thing of beauty did you see today?

What did you hear today that lifted your spirits? A song? A child's voice? A joke?

Now close your eyes and think of your day and what you wrote. Breathe deeply for a few minutes and visual a positive image from the day. Write down something important from this exercise that you want to remember.

Daily Intentions

Monday:

- To be: _____
- To feel: _____
- To appreciate: _____
- To let go of: _____
- To attract: _____
- To _____

Wednesday:

- To be: _____
- To feel: _____
- To appreciate: _____
- To let go of: _____
- To attract: _____
- To _____

Friday:

- To be: _____
- To feel: _____
- To appreciate: _____
- To let go of: _____
- To attract: _____
- To _____

Sunday:

- To be: _____
- To feel: _____
- To appreciate: _____
- To let go of: _____
- To attract: _____
- To _____

Tuesday:

- To be: _____
- To feel: _____
- To appreciate: _____
- To let go of: _____
- To attract: _____
- To _____

Thursday:

- To be: _____
- To feel: _____
- To appreciate: _____
- To let go of: _____
- To attract: _____
- To _____

Saturday:

- To be: _____
- To feel: _____
- To appreciate: _____
- To let go of: _____
- To attract: _____
- To _____

Notes:



live
IN THE
sunshine

SUNSHINE MOOD TRACKER - Color in a picture to represent your mood for each day!

Hooray

(excited, creative, productive, motivated, adventurous)

Happy

(content, peaceful, satisfied, loved)

Okay

(present, fine, normal, relaxed)

Angry

(frustrated, mad, irritated, rage)

Blah

(sad, disappointed, down, tired, sick, lazy)

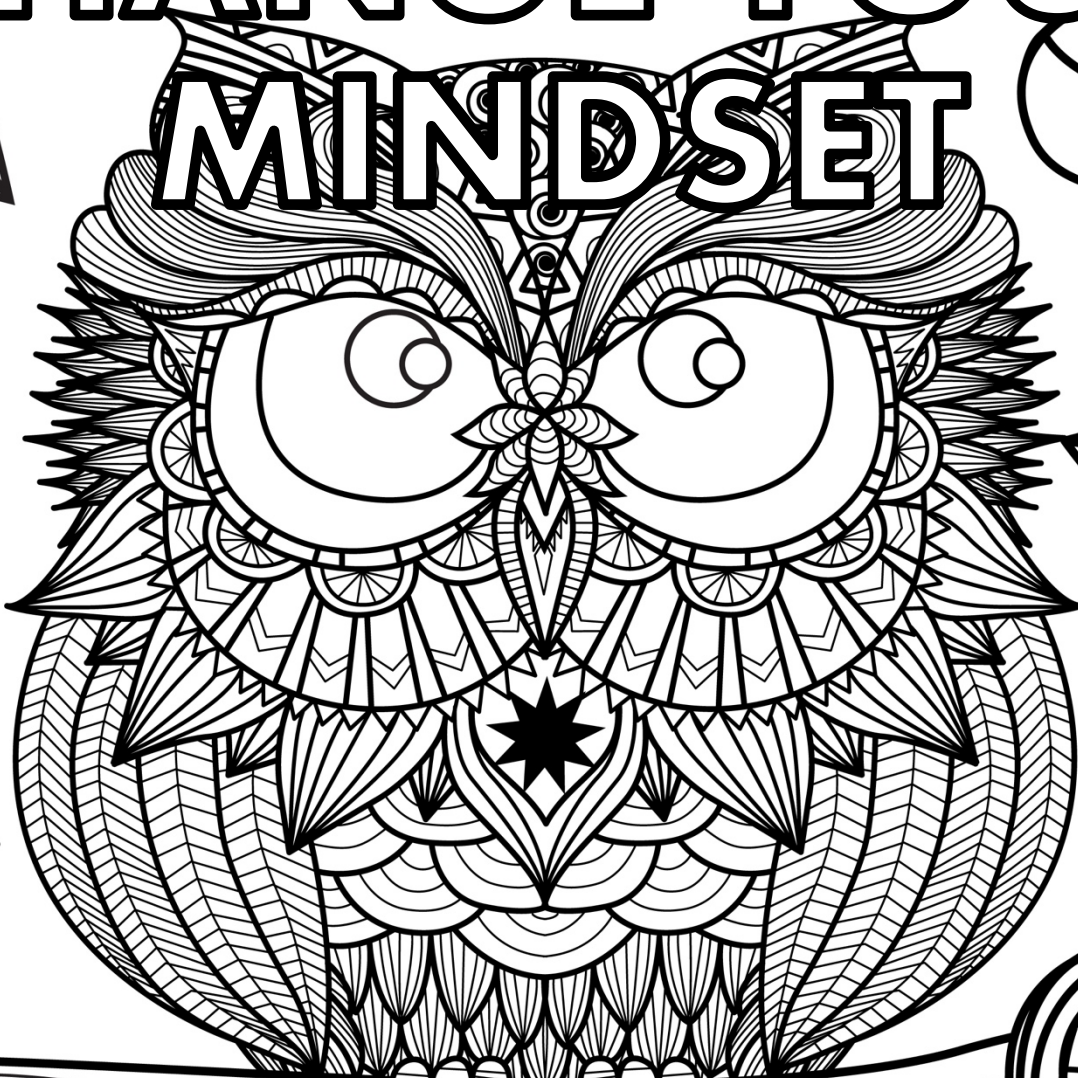
Stressed

(edgy, anxious, worried, nervous)

What Happened Today?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
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28. _____
29. _____
30. _____
31. _____

**CHANGE YOUR
MINDSET**



**CHANGE
YOUR LIFE**

**YOU WERE BORN
TO BE REAL, NOT
TO BE PERFECT.**

**IT'S
OK.**

The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.

KEEP GOING,

**YOU ARE
GETTING
THERE.**

You have to fight through some **bad days** to earn the **best days** of your life.



**“KNOW WHO YOU ARE
AND KNOW IT'S ENOUGH.”**

**WHAT
CONSUMES
YOUR MIND,
CONTROLS
YOUR LIFE.**

Change the way you see things,
and the things you see will change