

PROCESS TO CHANGE YOUR NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

I am always grateful for the work that you choose to do to love yourselves, to liberate yourselves from past trauma narratives, dysfunctional relationships, and celebrate your True Nature.

One of the most difficult roadblocks on the journey of awakening is our habitual tendency to entertain negative thinking. Some of this is hard wired into our brain as hypervigilant threat assessment and some is learned from family systems, culture, and relationships. Below is a simple combined meditative and journal practice that might be a helpful tool to begin to shift some of the negative thinking.

One of the great joys of being a human with consciousness is the ability to be aware of our thoughts, observe our thoughts, and change our thoughts. Thoughts come and go. Thoughts are real but not always true and you don't have to believe everything you think. Thoughts give rise to emotions. "E-motions" are energy in motion. They are the engine that translates thoughts into behaviors. Our thoughts are the waves (sometimes huge whitecaps!) on the surface of an ocean of consciousness. Underneath, at the depth, all is calm.

Journal Meditation Process

Choose a single negative or stressful thought and isolate that thought from the swirling confusing story your mind is generating about the situation and write it down. Now ask yourself these three questions about the thought:

1. Is that thought always true?
2. How do you react when you believe that thought?
3. Who would you be without that thought?

Handwrite your responses without censoring your thoughts. This allows you to see what's happening in your mind. Write out the answer to each question, one at a time.

Emotions are an essential part of you. Like thoughts, they, too, come and go. To become more mindful of emotions you might name the emotions as they arise. Naming the emotions engages the pre-frontal cortex reducing the power of the fight/flight/freeze limbic system. Let the emotions move through you like waves. Remember you are the deep calm ocean, and your emotions are just waves on the surface.

Offer compassion, loving kindness, caring, and forgiveness to yourself as you would to anyone was suffering. Ask yourself, "What do I need right now?" This is an opportunity to accept yourself a little bit more. This is an opportunity to know that you are not alone. Difficulties are part of common humanity. This is an opportunity to sooth yourself.

Enjoy awakening to your own more Authentic Self. Practice the courage to be imperfect allowing yourself to be vulnerable while setting boundaries. Practice the compassion that comes from knowing you are made of both strengths and struggles and that you deserve to be loved and appreciated just as you are. You are enough. Practice living and loving whole heartedly and experiencing joyfulness even when it's hard and even when you are wrestling with shame and fear of not being good enough. You deserve more love, not less.

Now take that original negative thought and turn it around into positive affirmation.

Reframe that thought into a first-person present tense positive statement. See if the new thought can give you a clue to your True Nature, your Real Self. Make the thought reflect what you really want to happen or what you really need right now.

If you are having difficulty with this process, I offer you some positive affirmation statements (below) that you might reflect on, use as journal starters, or as a focal point for meditation. You might repeat each one of these out loud and reflect with compassionate curiosity on your internal reactions or responses to these statements.

~I lack nothing to be happy and whole right in this moment.

~What I see in others is a reflection of my own state of mind.

~Forgiveness brings peace.

~Love needs no defense. If I give only love, I never need to be defensive.

~My self-worth is not based on my performance.

~True love is unconditional. I deserve more love, not less.

~Only the present is real. The past is over, and the future is not here yet.

~In order for me to change my experience, I must first change my thoughts.

~To give is to receive. For me to truly gain, others need not lose.

~Mistakes are not to be punished. They are opportunities for learning.

~My self-esteem comes from loving and accepting myself as I am today.

~I can't change others, but I can change how I perceive others.

~I am whole and complete right now.

