

5 Ways to Change Negative Beliefs

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Sometimes the enemy within can be much more dangerous than outside forces. In fact, struggling with negative beliefs about yourself makes it all too easy to lapse into self-destructive patterns. That's why breaking that no-win cycle of low self-esteem — and the bad choices related to it — is the first step to a more peaceful, productive life. Here are a few methods to help you get there.

Consider the Source

A loving family does not inflict harsh judgment on young children, nor do truly responsible teachers and coaches insult impressionable young people. If you were told you were lazy, unintelligent or homely as a child, remind yourself that those characterizations reflect badly on the adult who said them, rather than on you.

Assignment: Write a letter to a person from your past who damaged your self-esteem. You don't have to actually send the letter but focus on describing that person's unrealistic standards or constant judgment. The act of writing the letter will help you understand how those unfair words shaped you.

Remember That “Comparisons are Odious”

It's a centuries-old saying, but one that still resonates today. Comparing your life or personality to the success of a friend or colleague is one of the surest ways to spiral into self-loathing.

Assignment: Each day, make a note of something positive about yourself. Whether it's a kindness you did for a co-worker, a new skill you've mastered, or even something “vain” like a flattering new hairstyle, it's important to make note of these good things. Periodically reading this self-positivity journal will help you understand your own self-worth.

Name Your Unhealthy Beliefs

It's one thing to know in general that a bad self-image will bring you down — and another to identify some specific faults. Once you identify those supposed flaws, you can start to learn how to break that cycle of self-doubt.

Assignment: [Belief-restructuring therapy](#) can be an essential tool on your road to well-being. Customized treatment sessions help you identify, then address, these core beliefs about yourself that are weighing you down emotionally.

Interrogate Your Fears

It seems logical that if we have something we dislike about ourselves, then we'd do anything to change it, right? Yet lurking within many of us is the suspicion that what we don't like is so intrinsic to our personalities that it can't be changed — or that even if we solve or disprove that one trait, even worse ones will be lurking. Therefore, it's easier to complain about what we don't like about ourselves, rather than to do something which might fail.

Assignment: It may seem silly, but the question “What's the worst that could happen?” is an essential one to ask. Often, naming your fear makes you realize that it's either unlikely or easily solved. And if you find that this simple, self-directed exercise isn't doing the trick, there are other options. [Professional sessions specially designed to treat anxiety](#) are excellent tools in your quest to banish those negative beliefs and their surrounding fears.

Envision a Brighter Future

Once you do begin to overcome your fear of failure and explode some of those self-doubting myths, it's time to expand your horizons. If you've always told yourself you weren't creative, for example, what can you now accomplish, after accepting that you might have an artistic bent after all?

Assignment: Now comes the fun part. Brainstorm ways to catch up on what you've been missing all those years when you decreed yourself not good enough for a certain pursuit, be it hobby, career or even romance! Make a list of all you've been missing and concrete steps you can take to achieve the goals you once believed you weren't good enough for.

A Way Forward

Ready to stop the self-destructive cycle? [We're always here](#) to help you learn more about our testing, therapy and treatment services.