The Power of Positive Thinking

Everyone has negative thoughts at times. But if left unchecked, those negative thoughts can lead to a downward spiral of overeating or inactivity. Do not fall into this cycle.

My thought: "I am tired of always having to eat vegetables. I can never eat what I want."
The result: I eat half a bag of potato chips.
My next thought: "I can’t believe I did it again! I will never lose weight!"
The result: I feel discouraged and eat more.

When negative thoughts happen, catch them quickly and talk back with positive thoughts. The sooner I realize I am having a negative thought, the quicker I can get back on track.

Katy’s Story

Katy is at risk for heart disease. Her father had heart disease and she knows that by changing her eating and exercise habits, she can become healthier.

Katy has started walking around her neighborhood every morning and has not missed a day in two weeks. On Thursday morning, it is hot outside and Katy does not want to go for a walk. She looks at herself in the mirror and thinks, “What’s the point? I haven’t lost much weight anyway.”

Katy quickly realizes that she is having a negative thought. She says to herself, “Stop being negative, if I keep exercising I will eventually lose the weight!” Katy knows there are other ways she could exercise without going outside. She decides to do a 30 minute workout video in her living room instead of going out for a walk.

What negative thoughts am I having?

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____________________________________
Am I saying “NO!” to these negative thoughts? How can I stop them?

What positive thoughts can replace those negative ones?

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**Break the cycle of negative thinking:**

Behavior leads to thoughts

Feelings lead to behavior

Thoughts lead to feelings

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**Positive affirmations can fuel changes:**

- I am blessed with what I have!
- I have all the energy I need!
- I have love, joy and happiness throughout each day!
- Yes, I Can!

**What affirmations can I use throughout the day?**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of negative thought</th>
<th>Instead of these thoughts</th>
<th>Practice these positive thoughts</th>
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</table>
| Thinking healthy eating and exercise are too hard to fit in my life | I can never eat French fries again | • I will only have French fries once a week  
• If I order French fries, I will order a small |
| Exercise isn’t fun | • I will find an exercise I enjoy  
• I will focus on the benefits of physical activity |
| Blaming other people or situations for my problems | It’s raining outside so I won’t walk today | • I will find exercises that I can do indoors |
| My husband doesn’t want to eat vegetables so I can’t eat healthy | • I will make vegetables for myself  
• I will try to find recipes that both of us can enjoy |
| Focusing only on the negative things | I don’t have anyone to support me while trying to be healthy | • My friend Elaine is trying to eat healthy too; she will be supportive  
• I will ask my family and friends for more support |
| I didn’t eat enough fruit this week, I probably gained weight | • I ate fruit 5 days this week  
• I will keep a variety of fruits at home next week |
| Calling myself names | I’m pathetic | • I can walk a mile now without getting tired  
• I love myself and all the great changes I’ve made |
| I’m a terrible cook | • My kids said the food I made last night was really good  
• I will try new recipes |
| Comparing myself to others | I exercise more than Clayton, but still can’t lose weight | • I will ask Clayton for tips on exercising  
• I am so proud of the changes I have made to be more active |
| Rachel is able to walk two miles and I can’t walk one | • I will eventually be able to walk further  
• I will make time for strength training |
| Always assuming the worst | I might hurt myself while exercising and then I won’t be able to lose weight | • I will find safe exercises that I am able to do  
• I will be sure to stretch before and after exercising to avoid injury |
| My grandparents had heart disease; I’m sure I’ll have it too | • I will do my best to live a healthy lifestyle and stay positive  
• I will ask my doctor about ways to prevent heart disease |