

Intervention Strategies for Negative Thoughts

I do think that the greatest lesson of life is that you are responsible for your own life. - Oprah Winfrey

Strategies for your success

Here are some intervention strategies for negative thoughts. When you catch your brain forming one of these negative thoughts, try an intervention strategy. With practice, you will be able to change the negative thoughts into alternative thoughts that will lead to more productive emotions, body sensations and behaviors.

Strategy #1: Examine the Evidence.

- What is the evidence that your negative thought is really true?
- What would you do differently if this thought were false?

1. Suppose your negative thought is "I'm sure I will fail this class."
 - a. What evidence could you check to see if you really will fail this class?
 - b. If you are not failing this class, how might your behavior change?

Strategy #2: Get a Different Perspective.

- Tell yourself what you would tell a close friend who has this thought.
2. Suppose your brother said, "I am too stupid to do math." What would you tell him to convince him he is not too stupid to do math?

Strategy #3: Do Something Differently

- Identify a behavior that contributes to your negative math thought. Behave in a new way to get a different result.
3. When learning math, just like when learning sports, a foreign language, etc. If you don't practice - by doing homework - you can't expect to become proficient. Not doing homework is a behavior that contributes to not being able to do math.
 - a. How can you change this behavior to get a better result?
 - b. Name one of your behaviors that contribute to your negative thoughts about math.
 - c. How can you change that behavior to get a better result?

Strategy #4: Change the Wording.

- Restate a negative thought in a way that it becomes neutral or positive. Add the words "right now," or "yet."

For Example:

- Change "I can't do math" to "Right now, I am unable to do these math problems"
- Change "I don't understand" to "Right now, I don't understand yet."
- Change "I'm not prepared" to "I am not prepared yet."

4. Change the wording of two of your negative thoughts.

a. Change: _____

To: _____

b. Change: _____

To: _____

Strategy #5: Act "As If."

- Act as if you have the trait you lack or already are the kind of person you would like to become.

5. If you want to be a successful math student, think about how good math students act. What behaviors could you do to act "as if" you were a successful math student?