

# REPLACING FEARS WITH POSITIVE MESSAGES

It is very important after you start feeling good about yourself that you work to maintain that attitude. To do this, you need to be prepared to terminate the negative/fearful thoughts that can set you back and, at the same time, you need to keep supportive thoughts at the forefront of your mind. The exercise that follows will help you develop ways to address these factors and maintain your self-esteem.

1. Negative and fearful thoughts can undermine self-esteem by holding people back from doing things.

A. Circle the fearful thoughts that you have.

Making a mistake

Being left out or behind

Failing at something

Others getting mad at me

Being criticized

Not being liked

Going crazy

Others seeing me in a panic

Saying/doing something stupid

Others seeing me as unattractive

Others thinking I'm bad

Others hurting my feelings

Having a heart attack

Getting fired at work

Add your own fearful thoughts to the list.

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B. Now from the fearful thoughts you circled, select the two thoughts that you have most frequently. List them here and then answer the questions that follow.

1. First fearful thought: \_\_\_\_\_

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What is the worst that could happen if the feared event actually occurred?

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Review the following list of coping techniques and put an **X** next to two that you believe could help you overcome your fear.

- Do a reality check with self or others.
- Replace fearful thought with a positive, realistic thought.
- Share the fear with others to get reassurance.
- Affirm your own ability to cope using positive self-talk.
- Distract yourself with a pleasurable activity.
- Use relaxation exercises to reduce tension.
- Accept the fear and forge ahead with action.
- Engage in aerobic exercise.
- Visualize yourself as being successful at the feared task.
- Withdraw from the feared situation temporarily, and then return to it.
- Gradually face the feared situation until the fear is overcome.
- Use problem-solving skills to address the feared situation.
- Implement assertiveness skills to address the feared situation.
- Reward yourself for facing the feared situation.

Describe why you think the two techniques you selected will help you and how you will apply those techniques to your life.

Technique 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Technique 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Second fearful thought: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What is the worst that could happen if the feared event actually occurred?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Review the list of coping techniques again and put an **X** next to two that you believe could help you overcome this second fear.

Describe why you think the two techniques you selected will help you and how you will apply those techniques to your life.

Technique 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Technique 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. As a way of maintaining your self-esteem, it is important to keep in mind certain important thoughts.

A. Circle the affirmations that you most need to remember.

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|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| God doesn't make junk.               | I expect good things.                |
| I like myself.                       | I am a good person.                  |
| Mistakes are learning opportunities. | I have things to offer.              |
| I know I can do it.                  | I can trust myself.                  |
| I am lovable.                        | I feel good about me.                |
| I can make good decisions.           | I value myself.                      |
| No one is perfect.                   | I can say no.                        |
| I can be a friend to someone.        | I don't have to be perfect.          |
| I can deal with my fears.            | I am a child of God.                 |
| I can grow and change.               | My family loves me.                  |
| With God all things are possible.    | With God I can let go of fear.       |
| With God I can face anything.        | I can find strength in God's spirit. |
| I can forgive others.                | With God I'm never alone.            |
| Others do like me.                   |                                      |

B. Now develop three ways you can keep these thoughts at the front of your mind (e.g., write two or three thoughts on a note card, carry the card with you, and read it four times during your day).

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Evaluate your progress over the next 2 weeks in each of these three areas.

A. Stopping fearful thoughts

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|------------------|-------|------|------|------|
| Week 1 (circle): | Great | Good | Okay | Poor |
| Comment:         | _____ |      |      |      |
| Week 2 (circle): | Great | Good | Okay | Poor |
| Comment:         | _____ |      |      |      |

B. Daily affirmations

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|------------------|-------|------|------|------|
| Week 1 (circle): | Great | Good | Okay | Poor |
| Comment:         | _____ |      |      |      |
| Week 2 (circle): | Great | Good | Okay | Poor |
| Comment:         | _____ |      |      |      |