

# REFRAMING THOUGHTS: FIND THE POSITIVE



The human mind has an aspect of ego which is our personality's way of relating in the external world. The ego is the part of the mind that mediates between the conscious and the unconscious and is responsible for reality testing and a sense of personal identity. It sometimes gets a bad rap, but it's not all bad. It's only when we allow it to lead too much and get the best of us when it becomes a hindrance to our growth. Many times the ego is the chatter or voice in your head that speaks to you negatively and drums up negative thoughts. Everyone has these thoughts, and it's completely normal. The ego does not ever go away but you can learn when it is over-bearing and vying to lead and then choose to allow your own awareness and your heart to lead instead. An incredibly effective way to make this choice is to reframe negative thoughts and mind chatter. Here are some ideas on how to do so.

## TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

Be aware when the negative voice in your head gets going. Actively participate as the observer of the thought or chatter and flip the script to turn it to a positive. Rather than listen to the voice say 'there's no way you'll be able to do that' or 'you're not good enough for that role' silently say to yourself 'I know I'm good enough and worthy and I will be recognized for my work' or 'when the time is right I know I will take on the role that I want' etc. Rather than allow the ego to lead you down a spiral or into a cyclical pattern of negative thinking which leads to negative attitudes and behaviors, you can choose to respond rather than react accordingly. Reframing the negative to positive is a major step forward.

## NAME THE VOICE

For many people, especially those that are more visual learners, it can be highly effective to give the negative voice a name. Each time you hear the voice acknowledge it and talk to it as the observer - for example, say "oh hello (insert name) I see you're here." Even picturing that voice as if it were a person can be helpful. Then you can speak to it as the observer and repeat the steps for reframing the negativity to positivity.

## QUESTION YOUR THOUGHTS

Your thoughts are not you. They come in and out and are only an obstacle when you become fixated on them.

Rather than allow that voice or your thoughts to take you down the rabbit hole, stop it, question it. Ask where is the love/kindness/compassion in this thought or in what this voice is saying to me. Ask yourself whether the things you're thinking are even true. Most of the time the answer is no. That in and of itself can be empowering and allow you to move on. Again making an active choice to then reframe the thoughts and to respond versus react can help to reshape your mentality and ensure you continue your path to growth.

## CONTROL HOW YOU REACT

The ultimate power we possess as humans, is that we can control how we react to different situations. You may have heard the saying, ‘You can’t always control what happens to you, but you can certainly control how you react to it.’ In difficult situations it is easy to perceive it as negative, which causes negative thoughts and feelings, often leading to fear, inaction, anxiety, or depression. Performing the ABCDEs of cognitive reframing is most helpful in controlling how you react.

- » **A**CCURATE DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT - Describe the situation or event as accurately as possible.
- » **B**ELIEF - Identify your main beliefs around the event or situation. Consider these questions. What caused the event or situation to happen? What does the event or situation say about you? What do you think should happen?
- » **C**ONSEQUENCE - The consequence of what happened interpreted through your beliefs results in your thoughts, feelings and actions. Consider these questions. What kind of automatic negative thoughts generated in your mind? How do you feel about the situation/event? What is your actual response to the situation/event?
- » **D**ISPUTE - Now that you are aware of how you see the situation, what your beliefs are and how you think, feel and act as an automatic response to it, you can reframe. Start by challenging your thoughts and beliefs in order to see reality more accurately. Consider what is in your control and what you have no control over. Ask yourself if this way of thinking is helping the situation or making it worse. What is the most positive interpretation of the event/situation that you can think of?
- » **E**FFECT - Finally write down the final effect, which should be a more accurate view of things now that you have disarmed negative thoughts and feelings and have an action plan for performing better in the given situation. Write down your new thoughts and feelings about the event/situation and the action plan you will put in motion.