PSYCHOTHERAPY
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Use this sheet in conjunction with the diary templates found at https://www.ianoneill.org/blog search for “templates”.

Negative Thinking Types

Spot the negative modes of thinking and/or coping strategies that characterize "automatic thoughts" you may struggle with. Be sure to record your own thoughts on your favourite app or long hand on paper.

All or nothing thinking – i.e. ‘If I (we) don’t get this right I’m (we’re) finished!! - Or: "if I get this wrong I’ll be such a loser!" – *That’s a lot of unrealistic self-imposed pressure! "All or nothing thinking" basically sets you up for failure. It’s better to live a confident compromise in place of "all or nothing" such as "I am not perfect, living means doing things imperfectly so it's OK if I make a mistake".*

Disqualifying the positives – **i.e. the "Yah but" approach to life: "it’s great I got 90% on the test BUT what about the other 10%?!"** *That’s tons of unrealistic, unnecessary pressure that sets you up for anxiety and failure. Instead, allow yourself to celebrate the positive; you got 90% on the test! Awesome!*

Self labeling – "**I’m too (ugly, fat, skinny, poor etc) or not (smart enough, rich enough, tall enough, short enough, not _____ enough).** *Lies! All lies. The truth is very different than what appearances may suggest. Even Einstein had trouble sometimes (he failed the entrance exam to Zurich Polytechnic when he wanted to get into college). You have a lot to feel self-confident about! Why? Because you are a human being, and human beings are worthy! And noble! And complicated! And you are likely unaware of your own capacity for genius.*

“Catastrophizing” – the remote possibility of catastrophe is considered to be the only possibility, so "all is lost". *Come to terms with the fact that the 1% possibility of catastrophe is just that, only a 1% possibility! It can be allowed for in planning; don't let it stop you from proceeding with confidence. A first step in “coming to terms” is to write down the rational reasons why catastrophe is a 1% possibility and not the reverse.*

Co dependence – **"I can only be happy if people like me, if they are upset it means I did something wrong".** *The truth is much different: first, the maxim "it’s not about me" holds true. People don’t think about you nearly as much as you might fear! True self-confidence is partly rooted in that understanding. Affirm instead "people will like me because I am likeable". (See "Kindergarten emotions" below.)*

Kindergarten emotions – i.e. "do people like me? Will I fit in? People will think I’m weird!" Etc. *When learning to cope better in life it is important to remember the maxim "it’s not about me!" Fortunately, other people think about themselves far, far more than they think about you or anyone else! There’s a lot of freedom for you in that. It lends strength to another secret of effective interpersonal relations; namely "believe in yourself and people will believe in you". Wow! Coming to terms with this fundamental fact may be one of the great projects of your life. Here’s a mantra to remember; "people will like me because I am likeable".*

Disqualifying the present – "I will relax later" or "I will take a vacation next year". *Tomorrow never comes, all we have is today, therefore embrace what you have; embrace the present! If that means taking time for self-care, or taking time for what you have been neglecting, including time to relax, take time for yourself!*

Pessimism –'This (life) sucks!' *Instead, deliberately, and with determination, as a challenging act of will, choose the opposite point of view! For example, you might affirm "there is an awesome silver lining to my story!" because adversity is the mother of enlightenment (as well as invention). This may be another great project of your life.*

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