



Your thoughts

Thoughts are ideas and opinions that pop up in your mind due to constant thinking. They are persistently wading through your mind. Self messages are the observations and judgments you have of yourself. These self messages stem from what you heard and felt as a child, all through to your teenage years, from family, friends, society and of course, yourself. These messages can be positive or negative and are one of the most powerful tools for shaping your self-esteem. The more positive self-messages you will listen to and trust, the better you will feel about yourself as a person. On the other hand, the more negative self-messages you listen to and believe, the worse you will begin to feel about yourself.

As a young person, you have the capability to look into the messages you carry and check how they affect you, and finally sieve out the devaluing ones. You also have the ability to make a willed choice and substitute the negative self messages with new, positive messages that will help you feel good about yourself. It is clear that nobody can stop negative self messages from coming to your mind, but you can help yourself by accepting the positive messages and using them to build a healthy self-esteem.

Change it

Remember, you don't have to accept and regard as true every thought that comes to your mind. However, you have to choose and use the positive self messages to help you build a healthy self-esteem.

Challenge it

Bear in mind that your inner critic will never have anything good to say, it will always put you down, but for some reason you always let it win. It isn't always right, it just thinks it is. Now, it is your job to challenge it.

Go through the following steps and learn how to get control over your thoughts.



1. Note down all the times you have felt down about yourself. What have you been thinking? Write down these thoughts.

For instance :

“There’s no point in putting in an effort and trying harder. I am useless at this subject, anyway.”

2. Write down what you were doing at that time

For instance :

“I was studying for a chemistry test.”

3. What happened as a result of these thoughts? Jot this down.

For instance :

“I stayed in that melancholy, didn't study and ended up flunking the test.”

Now ask yourself:

1. What makes me think that my thoughts are right?
2. What makes me think they are not?
3. What would someone close to me say about these notions?
4. If someone else was thinking this way, what would I tell them?
5. What is the worst thing that could have happened to me?
6. Does it seem reasonable to think of myself in such a bad manner?

Casestudy

Umaima was once going through her list of self-messages and she realised that some of those that affect her life the most were, “I am a respectful girl,” “I am not as intelligent as my sister,” and “I am very lanky.”

Upon putting thought on these self messages, she came to the understanding that no matter how well she performed in school, she was never happy with herself because she had put herself on a bar chart with her sister. She then understood that Allah ﷻ had created her sister differently and He had created her differently. She changed her



self message to, “One of Allah’s ﷻ bounties upon me is my intelligence. I get good grades in school and I am happy with the effort I put in. I will continue to work hard and perform well.”

Umaima accepted that she and her sister were never meant to be the same and that they each had qualities that the other didn't have, which was what made them unique.

She decided to express her gratitude to Allah ﷻ for all her wonderful qualities by putting together all the positive messages she would like to hear about herself and reading them everyday. When she ingrained these positive self-messages in her mind, they began to automatically appear every time she felt upset, disheartened or sad. Umaima learnt to claim her power by using these positive self-messages and began to build her own healthy self-esteem.