

Strategy #19: Awareness of Negative Thoughts

When we are stressed, our minds look for potential threats or danger as a way to keep us safe. When your thoughts tend toward frustration, anger, and blaming, you may be engaging in negative thinking patterns. One way to interrupt this cycle is to check whether you are engaging in thought patterns that perpetuate your stress.

How to practice this strategy

Ask yourself the following questions about your current thoughts:

1. Perhaps am I overestimating disaster?
2. Perhaps am I expecting perfection from myself or someone else?
3. Perhaps am I jumping to conclusions and assuming I know how something is going to turn out?
4. Perhaps am I blaming or criticizing myself or someone else for something that isn't entirely my fault or his or her fault?
5. Perhaps am I focusing only on the good and positive aspects of someone else and comparing myself to her or him?
6. Perhaps am I setting unrealistically high standards that neither I nor anyone else could reach?
7. Perhaps am I mind reading and assuming someone is thinking negatively about me?
8. Perhaps am I concentrating on my weaknesses and forgetting my strengths or all I have already accomplished?
9. Perhaps am I "shoulding" all over myself or someone else with judgments about what should or should not take place?
10. Perhaps am I thinking in black-and-white terms without checking for other possibilities?

Which thought patterns do I tend to use and want to change?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

