



Break your addiction to negative thinking

Bởi:

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“Negative thinking must be treated like any addiction – with commitment to life, patience, discipline, a will to get better, forgiveness, self-love, and the knowledge that recovery is not just possible, but, following certain guidelines, inevitable.”

Peter McWilliams: *You Can't Afford the Luxury of a Negative Thought*

Psychologists tell us that the human mind will automatically gravitate toward negative, frightening, and depressing thoughts unless a conscious effort is made to steer thinking in a more positive direction. Compounding this hardwired predisposition, from a very early age we are subjected to negative messages from parents (the first word a toddler learns is “no”), teachers, schoolyard bullies, and abusive bosses (which is what schoolyard bullies often become when they grow up). Negative thinking actually does share many characteristics with substance addiction. It starts with a small dose – usually with someone else giving you the first one free (the parent, the teacher, the schoolyard bully).

You grow tolerant to it over time and so the dose increases. “Look at that pimple” over time becomes “You’re ugly” which in turn transmogrifies into “You’re unlovable.”

Like any gateway drug, one negative thought opens the door to other forms of negative thinking. The suspicion that you’re unlovable leads to increasingly desperate attempts to get other people to prove you wrong, and to increasingly intense fear of rejection – both of which lead to behaviors that are almost guaranteed to eventually bring about the feared result.

As with any addictive substance, you develop a tolerance for negative thinking. You get to the point where you hardly notice that it’s going on, and when you do it doesn’t strike you as being a problem (Me? No, I don’t have a drinking problem! Me? No, I don’t have a negative thinking problem!).

And as with any addiction, you are aided and abetted by co-conspirators – the people who don’t want you to stop listening to their whining and being in on their gossip

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sessions; well-intentioned friends and relatives who discourage you from quitting the day job you hate, and that is the source of much of your inner negativity, so you can start a business doing something you love; the shrink who assures you that it's all your parents' fault.

And as with any addiction, nobody can break you free until you take complete and total personal responsibility for yourself.