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Think Outside The Box

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Alternative Thoughts

Fighting depression is not just about challenging negative thoughts, it's also about finding the right mindset. This means changing your perspective and adopting a more rational thinking style.

Life is neither black, nor white. Most situations are somewhere in the gray area. However, it is you who chooses how to interpret what happens to you. With the right set positive affirmations, alternative thoughts, or however you choose to call them, life can take on a new meaning.



The banner features the Explorable logo at the top center, with the text "EXPLORABLE" in a large, bold, white font and "Quiz Time!" in a smaller, white, cursive font below it. Below the logo are three square images, each with a white border and a white caption below it. The first image shows a pair of red roller skates on a wooden deck, with the caption "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2". The second image shows a fan of colorful pencils, with the caption "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2". The third image shows a Ferris wheel at sunset, with the caption "Quiz: Flags in Europe". To the right of the three images is a white button with the text "See all quizzes =>" in orange.

“I’m a fallible human being, just like everyone else”

You probably hear this all the time, but have you ever stopped to think about it? Perhaps now is the time to do so.

One of the most fundamental rules of living, is that people are prone to making mistakes. It may sound a bit harsh, but that’s just the way things are. Living an “error-free” would be like fighting gravity without any tools – impossible.

Of course this shouldn’t stop us from trying to become better versions of ourselves. However, it is crucial to first accept your imperfections, before you strive to improve.

“One mistake doesn’t make me worthless or incompetent”

On many occasions, people who struggle with negative thinking tend to make mountains out

of molehills. Of course this is not purposefully done – it is a subconscious process that can be worked upon.

In other words, it may be easy to blow small problems out of proportion, by assuming the worst, as a result of a mere mistake.

Fear of Failure

As you already know, we are all prone to making mistakes and failing sometimes. In spite of this reality, fear of failure is more common than you'd think.

However, whether a mistake would be defeating or would provide a learning opportunity, always depends on our personal interpretation of failure.

Never forget that your mistakes are valuable lessons that can help you improve your life.

“It's time to live in the present”

Negative thoughts are often focused on worries about the past, which is already over, or the future, which hasn't happened yet.

We either tend to get tangled in painful memories and regrets, or unconstructive worrying that doesn't bring any benefits towards our future.

Worrying May Provide Comfort Zone

Living in the past, or creating elaborate future constructs, may provide a subconscious comfort zone. Although both the past or future may be sources of torment, worrying could be a subconscious way to avoid purposeful.

Taking action may often be difficult, because you are venturing into the unknown. In the meantime, remaining in circumstances you know well, even if they are unfavorable, is often the choice our subconsciousness makes, because it is easier. However, your conscious mind should also have a say in it, if you'd like to be happier.

Training for the Present

Although living in the present may require more strenuous effort, it is the healthy choice that can pave the path towards a happier existence. Whenever you find yourself regretting the past, or worrying about the future, consider what changes you can implement right now, in order to improve.

You don't have to engage in tremendous change straight away. You can start by doing small, positive things, such as taking a walk, reading a few pages of a book, etc., and gradually increase positive actions, concentrated around the present.

“My life has meaning”

If struggling with depression, life may have become a series of strenuous, tedious and repetitive actions.

Many of us wake up, go to work, come home, watch TV, and then go to sleep, day after day. A repetitive cycle, with no excitement, no prospects of change or fulfilling one's dreams, may easily lead to the misconception that life has no meaning.

So what is the meaning of life?

Naturally, that is a very personal question and the answer is probably at least slightly different for everyone. The key could be a hidden talent, a fulfilling relationship, or simply the joy of being alive.

Create Meaning

It is up to you to take some time, examine your life and your desires, so that you can find those areas that are meaningful to you. After that, all that is left to do is take action towards that meaning. Remember, you can start with the smallest of steps, as long as you do start.

“I’m responsible for my actions”

A psychological concept, called locus of control, investigates a person's tendency to attribute life's events to either internal or external factors.

When our locus of control is internal, this means that we see ourselves as the makers of our own destiny – we accept responsibility for both the good and bad that happens to us, and feel capable of changing our own lives for the better.

External locus of control, on the other hand, robs us of our sense of control, over our own lives. We may feel like a timber boat, being thrown around a vicious ocean, with no control of our own fate. Obviously, this type of mindset may lead to a lot of negativity and a feeling of worthlessness.

Changing Your Perspective

Your locus of control is something that has gradually developed over the years, through your experiences and interactions with other people. However, it can be changed. All you have to do, is try to ask yourself questions, such as:

“How is my interpretation impacting the situation?”

“How can I interpret this situation differently?”

“What could I do, in order to change this situation for the better?”

“What have I learned from this experience and how can I apply this lesson?”

“What could I do differently next time?”

These are mere examples – you can come up with your own questions. Just make sure you phrase them positively, so that you can weave a constructive, helpful new pattern of thinking.

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