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Think Outside The Box

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Mindfulness of Thought

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Self-critical thoughts have the inclination to make you truly believe in them, 100 percent, even though often they do not correspond with reality.

Brains are complicated and brilliant machines, but they are also imperfect. That is why not all our thoughts are reality-based or meaningful. This is often true when it comes to self-critical thoughts.

The banner features the Explorable logo and the text "EXPLORABLE Quiz Time!". Below this are three quiz cards:

- Card 1: Image of red roller skates on a wooden deck. Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2
- Card 2: Image of a fan of colorful pencils. Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2
- Card 3: Image of a Ferris wheel at sunset. Quiz: Flags in Europe

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Believing Your Critic

Believing in your negative self-assessment to the utmost, involves acting on it, which may lead to an increase in erroneous behavior, emanating from the thought. In its core, this cycle leads to more negative self-judgment, which pushes you further down the path of irrational, negative, counterproductive behavior.

Observe Your Thoughts

Being mindful of our thoughts involves observing them from a distance, without any judgment, and accepting that they are a part of us, while understanding that they are not necessarily true. We may not believe them or even take them seriously, but acknowledging them is important, because it allows us a better understanding of our own inner world.

Uncovering Your Thoughts

For example, while thinking 'I am worthless', you may be aware of this thought, as well as the emotions and urges that follow the thought.

It is only when you are mindful of these that you can go a step further and tell yourself that 'I made a mistake and at present, everything I do seems futile. I am frustrated and angry with myself and tempted to chuck everything and just leave.'

Once you have allowed yourself to acknowledge that thought, you can begin to change it, as it is counterproductive and diminishes your happiness.

Notice, Don't Judge

Try to label these self-critical thoughts as phrases of 'I'm having the thought that...'. Thus, the self-critical thought of 'I am a failure' becomes 'I'm noticing the thought that I'm a failure'. Having multiple self-critical thoughts might be combined as 'I'm noticing a lot of self-critical thoughts at present.'

After this realization, you can figure out the next constructive step which we will discuss later in the form of rational response.

The Benefits

Working on this skill of mindfulness will lead to an improvement in your ability to verbally describe internal experiences, observe thoughts and emotions without judgment. It would also enable you to focus on the events in the present moment and avoid lingering on, or reacting to every negative thought that comes to mind.

Mindfulness further hones your ability to self-validate and challenge negative thoughts.

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