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Think Outside The Box

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Reinvent Your Thoughts

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No matter how severe your self-criticism may be, you can always take precise and effective measures, in the form of behavioral changes, in order to change your thoughts and have more compassion for yourself.

As you learned how to monitor your self-critical thoughts, we talked about listing some common expressions of self-criticism that you most often use. Once you have these jotted down, you can rework and redecorate them, by using a positive spin.

The banner features the Explorable logo at the top center. Below it are three quiz cards arranged horizontally. The first card shows a pair of red roller skates on a wooden deck with the text 'Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2'. The second card shows a fan of colorful pencils with the text 'Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2'. The third card shows a Ferris wheel at sunset with the text 'Quiz: Flags in Europe'. To the right of the cards is a link that says 'See all quizzes =>'.

Positive Affirmations

For example, you can tell yourself, 'I did the best I could', 'We all make mistakes. It's not something drastic that one cannot recover from', 'I will keep doing the best I can and I will improve'.

These statements are called positive affirmations. They are in direct contrast to harsh self-critical statements, and can be used to completely replace them.

Rehearse Your Affirmations

They are best used when standing in front of a mirror and saying them out loud. For the first

couple of days, it may seem like make-believe but sooner rather than later, they will become a part of you and you will start to believe in what you say to yourself.

You can also write down these statements on a card or paper and carry the notes in your pocket, or post them where you can often see them, like on the dashboard of your car, or a mirror at home.

Internalize Positive Thoughts

These thoughts should be repeated until they are a part of you. This will come in handy especially when you are feelings low. Repeat them as many times as you can and try to keep the 'if's and 'but's away.

The reason why it is so important to repeat and see them often, is because when we are strongly affected by an event, we tend to automatically jump to the thoughts we are used to.

Since you are currently accustomed to self-criticism, that is probably the conclusion you are inclined to hastily make. Instead, you can replace that negativity with constructive affirmations.

Treat Yourself Well

Apart from the affirmations, you can also show yourself kindness, in the form of self-appreciation. Compliment yourself on whatever you can think of, even if it is only tiny details at first. It could be something about your abilities, skills, personality or efforts. It might seem like boasting but it really isn't.

It's acknowledging to yourself what a wonderful human being you are. You might want to start small if you hit a roadblock. It could be something like 'I am funny and can make people laugh', 'I am trustworthy', 'I keep the promises I make' etc.

Appreciate Yourself

One final thing you can do is write down two self-appreciations each day and put them in a jar. At the end of the week, you can read them out loud with conviction. This jar will also come in handy when you're feeling low or worthless.

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