

Negative Thoughts Contribute to Depression and Anxiety

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People who experience prolonged anxiety and depression have many negative thoughts exacerbate and reinforce depression and anxiety. Negative thoughts are typically about one's self, the world, and anticipation of the future.

Negative view of self involves an overall negative view of oneself, with feelings of worthlessness, guilt, and helplessness.

Negative view of the world involves a pessimistic worldview where most events appear hateful, malicious, or malignant.

Negative view of the future involves cynical anticipation of what will happen.

Negative automatic thoughts in depression and anxiety reciprocally cause and reinforce each other. Before the onset of depression, specific situations may engender negative thoughts. Once depressed, the afflicted may have negative thoughts about anything. Negative thoughts occur almost automatically, especially in the absence of other engaging thoughts, or while trying to incorporate new, contradictory information. Sometimes, they seem to come out of nowhere without warning or a trigger. They are called "Automatic Negative Thoughts" by many researchers, scholars, and therapists. Automatic negative thoughts, or cognitive distortions, exacerbate depression because they seem like accurate assessments, which are generally congruent with worldview and beliefs. Most of the time, the ideas are irrational and counterproductive for dealing with life on life's terms. Someone with chronic anxiety or depression can benefit from challenging these cognitive distortions, identifying them for what they are--depressing, anxiety-producing, and false. Some beliefs and attitudes are so over-learned that they persist in the face of rational or evidentiary disconfirmation.

Depending on the content and context of negative automatic thoughts or cognitive distortions, specific therapeutic intervention can eliminate these destructive thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes, thereby reducing the negative impact on all aspects of a person's life. Distraction only works so well without conscious replacement with neutral, if not optimistic, evaluations. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a powerful tool that alters negative paradigms and improves the quality of life.

This triad of negative thought is pernicious and often intrudes when trying to make positive changes in your life. As you work to eliminate depression, you may become aware of pessimistic thoughts such as "I can't change," and "This won't work." Remember that when you are depressed, these negative themed thoughts tell you that you cannot change, that you have always felt like this and will always feel like this, and that others cannot help you. Don't let these negative views increase your self-doubt, discourage you, or lead to giving up before you start.

Counteract them by focusing on understanding and applying what you are learning. When negative thoughts discourage you from doing something therapeutic that has been recommended, try it anyway. Think of it as an experiment. See what happens. Use the results of your experiments to practice challenging cognitive distortions. If your thoughts remind you of past "failures" and "uncertain futures," tell yourself the truth. You can't

change the past, and we don't know what challenges await us in the future. Rehearsing the possibilities can paralyze us. Perceived past failures and anticipatory dread about the future keeps us from the here and now. Life is much more manageable in the present. Along the way, practice some self-compassion and self-acceptance as you grow.

"Are you tired of constant worry and anxiety? [The Worry Workbook](#) can help you let go of needless worry and beliefs that are holding you back. Download our digital PDF now and start living a happier life!"

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