

## Silence Your Inner Critic

Do you give yourself negative messages? Many people do. But over the long term, studies show, self trash-talk is associated with higher stress levels and even depression. That's why it's useful to keep an eye on the things you tell yourself, and challenge some of the negative aspects of your thinking. Whenever you find yourself feeling depressed, angry, anxious or upset, use this as your signal to stop and become aware of your negative self talk. When you are in a good mood and when you have a positive attitude about yourself, ask yourself the following questions about each negative thought about yourself that you have noticed:

- Is this message really true?
- Would a person say this to another person? If not, why am I saying it to myself?
- What do I get out of thinking this thought? If it makes me feel bad about myself, why not stop thinking it?

Mayo Clinic, an internationally known non-profit medical group, identifies positive thinking as an important stress management skill. It can also keep you on track in a large project or move you forward on a long-term dream, as well as increase your enjoyment of every aspect of your life. You can work on changing your negative thoughts to positive ones:

- Every time you realize you are thinking the negative thought, replace it with a positive one. Some great examples of this are in the chart to the right.
- Repeat your positive thought over and over to yourself – out loud whenever you get a chance.
- Write the positive thought over and over.
- Make visual reminders of the positive thought, put them in places where you see them often.

It really helps to have a neutral “third-party” to review your negative self talk and to help you transform it into something useful. Your EAP counselor is the perfect resource for this. A counselor will be supportive, realistic and confidential. Call today and arrange for a session in person, by phone or online. There is no cost to you and all services are confidential.



Negative self-talk	Positive thinking
I've never done this before and will probably fail.	This is an opportunity to learn something new.
I can't stand being criticized.	If people criticize me, I can survive. I don't have to be perfect.
I've never accomplished anything – I'm worthless.	I have really accomplished many things.
I've done nothing to deserve a good life.	I deserve to be happy and healthy.
I'm stupid if I don't know all the answers.	I'm an intelligent person and I can look for the information I need.
I don't have any willpower.	I am in control of myself and I enjoy that experience.

## Don't Shortchange the 15-Minute Break

Fifteen-minute breaks need more respect. They can be powerful recovery periods for managing stress. But don't head for the staff kitchen or a coworker's cubicle on break! You'll shortchange the health benefits. **Complete detachment is what you're shooting for.**

If possible, leave your smart phone behind. Try a quick walk, go to the lounge on another floor, or head around the corner and sit on a bench. The complete shift in focus is what maximizes these mini-rejuvenators. Reading at your desk or playing a game on your computer doesn't count. Go outside and get some exercise and fresh air. Talk about something non-work-related. Laugh, think, connect with a friend, and then return to your job recharged.

Stress management involves many small steps to control (not eliminate) stress. Making effective use of a break is an important element. Remember, managing stress involves making conscious choices. For most people, stress management needs to be viewed as a necessity and not a luxury, and taking a short break during the day is an important component of a successful plan.



Even a quick walk  
can make  
a difference

## Plant Seeds Now for Next Year's Harvest

Autumn, Harvest time, Thanksgiving. In this season we usually think of reaping the bounty of the seeds that have been sown in the past. But why not use this time of year to plan and take action toward a positive life change that may bear its own harvest next Thanksgiving? A year may seem like a long time but as we all know, twelve months pass whether we are making progress toward a personal goal or remaining stagnant.

Picture what next November may be like for you if you use this year for personal growth and improving your well being. There are countless ways to do this such as learning a new skill, becoming more fit through exercise or eating well, spending more quality time with family and friends, better managing your stress or finances.

EAP's "Coaching for Well Being" benefit offers individualize phone support for all of these improvements. An EAP counselor will help you identify goals and steps to achieve them and then stay in touch to help you measure your progress. Call the number below for more information.



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