

Compassionately Questioning Negative Thoughts

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

Thoughts? Heart? Body? None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



Most of us can understand the hold of a negative thought stream. When we're caught up in one of these thinking patterns, breaking it can be a great challenge. Learning to compassionately and curiously intervene with these thoughts can shift our mindset overtime, giving us greater control over the thoughts that stay with us.

Examples of negative thinking includes:

- "I never get it right."
- "Things are just so unfair."
- "I will never be good enough."
- "How could I have been so stupid?"

These sorts of thoughts are neither kind nor accurate. They fail to encompass the full picture of any scenario and they are often exaggerated responses to some event. Furthermore, they are often habitual, developed over years of conditioning. By bringing them to our awareness, it becomes possible to compassionately and mindfully shift them.

To gently interrupt and transform these patterns of thought, we are invited to compassionately and curiously explore what moves through the mind to assess its accuracy. And, where possible, we are then encouraged to replace it with a neutral or positive thought.

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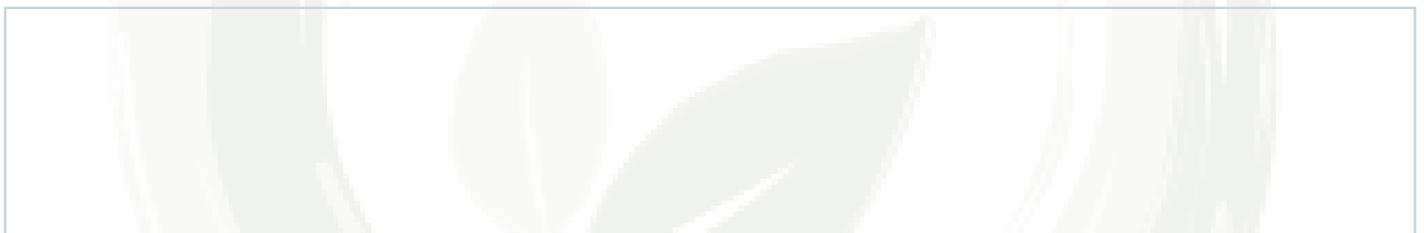
PRACTICE:

1. When a negative thought arises (often accompanied by a low or anxious mood), note what the story is that is replaying in your mind. What is the narrative you are telling yourself?



2. With patience, openness, and compassion, begin a deeper inquiry into the thought:

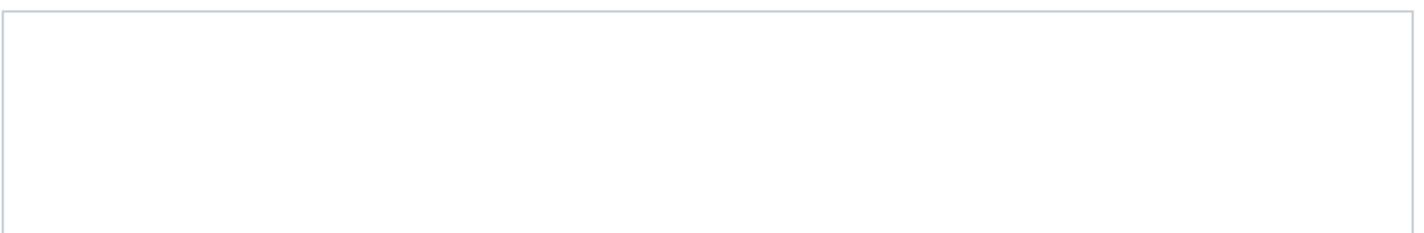
- What is supporting this belief I am carrying?
- Is there evidence that supports a contrary belief that I am overlooking?
- What conclusions am I making?
- What limited beliefs play into the conclusions I make?
- Do I know that this thought or belief is true?



3. Consider another thought or belief that could also be valid – and that might invite a new way forward. For instance, if the original negative thought was, “I will never be understood by him,” you might welcome a thought like: “My perception is that I am not presently being understood my partner. How might I communicate this differently?”

You might use the following questions to help open up new possibilities:

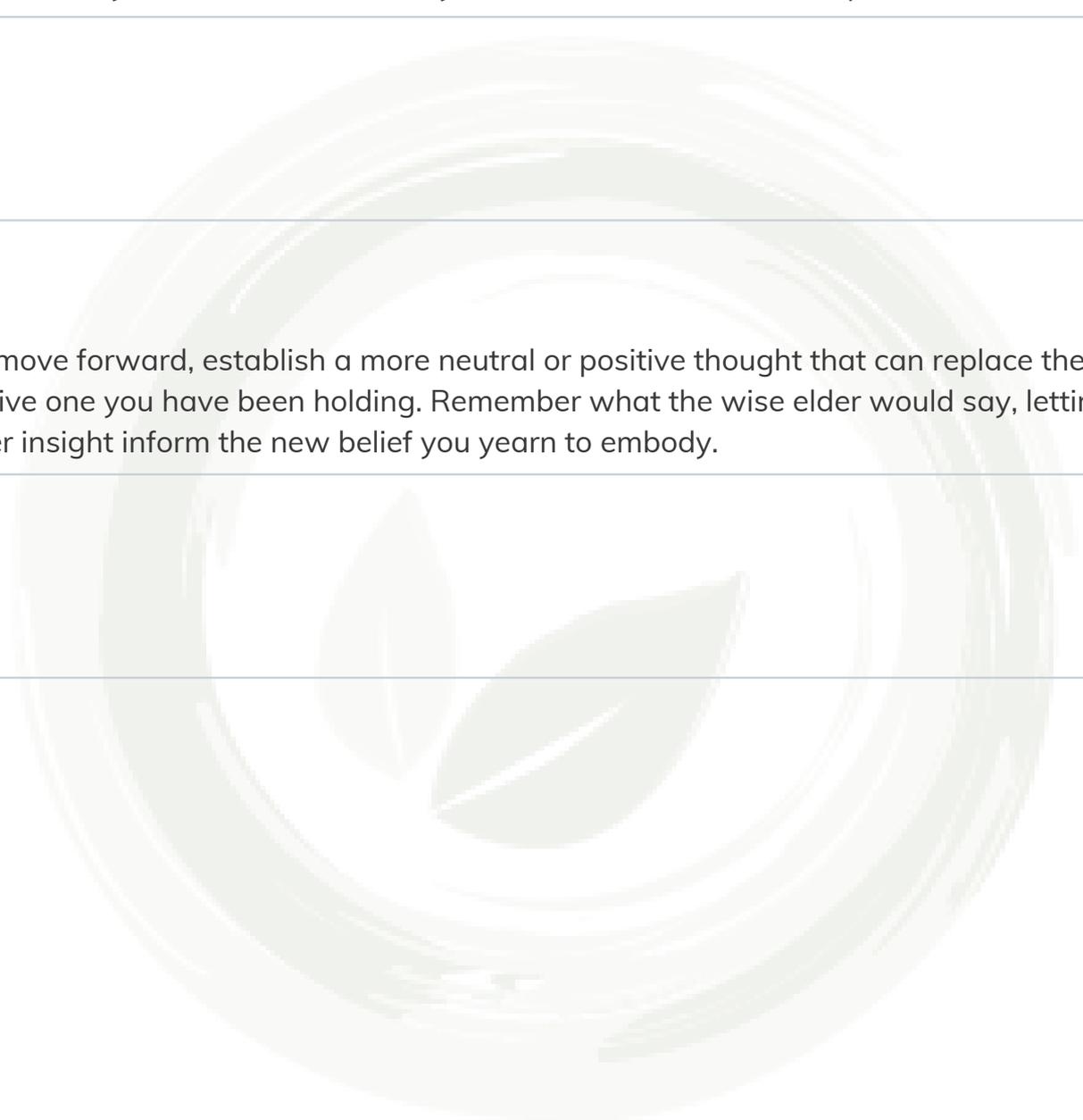
- Is there another way of seeing this?
- What is a more neutral way of viewing this? What would be a positive way?
- What am I not seeing? What is my current viewpoint missing?



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4. If the negative thought remains firmly held, consider what a wise elder of loving caregiver might say to you right now. What would their perspective be of this situation? Can you offer yourself the words that your wisest inner self would speak?



5. To move forward, establish a more neutral or positive thought that can replace the negative one you have been holding. Remember what the wise elder would say, letting this deeper insight inform the new belief you yearn to embody.