

BREAKING FREE FROM EXAGGERATED THINKING

Exaggerated thinking happens when our thoughts become too extreme and unrealistic. It is often linked to expecting the worst or making situations seem bigger than they really are.

These thoughts can make us feel stuck, discouraged, or even anxious.

Instead of letting exaggerated thoughts control how we feel, we can challenge them and replace them with more balanced, realistic thoughts. Doing this helps us feel more confident, make better decisions, and move forward in a positive way.

Task 1: Spot and Replace Exaggerated Thinking

Example Thought:

“I completely embarrassed myself in front of everyone today. I always say the wrong thing. Nobody likes me, and I will never have real friends.”

Step 1: Identify the exaggerations

“I completely embarrassed myself.” → This assumes that one moment defines everything.

“I always say the wrong thing.” → This is an overgeneralisation; no one is always wrong.

“Nobody likes me.” → This assumes that one incident reflects everyone’s opinion.

“I will never have real friends.” → This ignores the possibility of building connections over time.

Step 2: Replace with balanced thinking

“Everyone makes mistakes sometimes. One moment does not define me.”

“I may not have said what I wanted to, but I can learn from it.”

“Some people like me for who I am, even if I make mistakes.”

“Friendships take time to grow, and one awkward moment will not ruin everything.”

Task:

Now it is your turn! Look at the exaggerated thought below and write a more balanced version.

Exaggerated Thought:

“I completely messed up that presentation. I am terrible at public speaking, and no one will ever take me seriously again.”

Write your balanced response here:

Task 2: Challenge Your Own Exaggerated Thinking

Think about a time when you felt really worried or anxious.

What was the exaggerated thought you had?

Example: "If I make a mistake at work, I will lose my job and never find another one."

Example: "If I forget something important, people will think I am completely unreliable."

Was this thought completely true, or was it an exaggeration?

How did it make you feel?

What would be a more balanced and helpful way to think about it?

Example: "Mistakes happen at work. I can learn from this and do better next time.

One mistake does not define my entire career."

Example: "Forgetting something does not mean I am unreliable. Everyone forgets things sometimes, and I can take steps to be more organised."

Key Takeaway:

Exaggerated thinking can make challenges seem bigger than they are. When we recognise these thoughts and replace them with more realistic ones, we build confidence, resilience, and problem-solving skills. Keep practising, and soon balanced thinking will become second nature!

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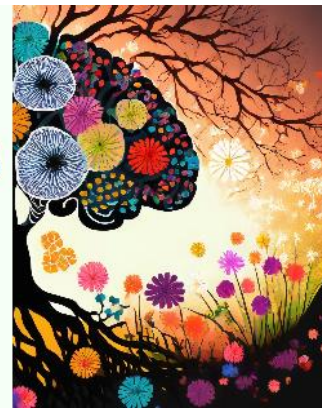
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