

You Are Not Your Thoughts: 10 Ways to Get Rid of Unhealthy Thoughts

You are not your thoughts, and you are not your fears. They are like newspaper articles or the opinions of someone else: they are not who you really are.

When we were young, older people told us how the world works, and as young dewy-eyed youths, we believed them. As children, we were very curious. We wanted to learn so much that we instantly accept anything we learn as a fact.

As we grow up, we eventually learn to identify and distinguish facts from opinions. If someone says that Jelly beans taste bad, we know that it's just an opinion and not a fact because it is based on personal preference.

But when it comes to ourselves, we can't seem to separate the two. Why is that?

Where do these intrusive, unhealthy thoughts come from?

In this article, you will learn why you are not your thoughts, and what you can do to get rid of unhealthy thoughts.

Human Biology and Fear

We are social animals, and this means two things:

1. We have a biological drive to seek validation from others, so we try to please others for survival.^[1]
2. We are biologically programmed to look for danger, so we focus on the negatives to help our survival.^[2]

These two things are the sources of our unhealthy thoughts, which are further exacerbated by the unrealistic standards set by society.

We need to be liked to feel safe. To not be liked is to face rejection and therefore, imminent death without the protection of our tribe.

In the modern-day, what this biological fear translates to is not being perfect in the eyes of the pack. For others to like us, we have to conform to an ideal because when we don't, we feel vulnerable.

In order to deal with this fear of vulnerability, we build ourselves up mentally and protect ourselves by bullying ourselves so we don't feel weak.

Why Does This Get Out of Control?

Sometimes our thoughts are so backed up by our insecurities, that they create lies we believe. We all know that they are just thoughts and aren't facts. They are normally routed in the form of 'I am not good enough', and they are rooted in fear.

Fear is the root of self-hate.

We are always afraid of being rejected, and it drives most of our unhealthy thoughts.

You are not your thoughts, and you are not your fears. They are like newspaper articles or the opinions of someone else: they are not who you really are. They are just a construction of the world you live in.

10 Ways to Get Rid of Your Unhealthy Thoughts:

1. Dissociation

I want you to picture your negative thoughts not as truth but as opinions.

Here is the difference:

1. Truth: *that which is true or in accordance with fact or reality.*
2. Opinion: *a view or judgment formed about something that is not necessarily based on fact or knowledge.*

Your negative thoughts about yourself are not facts; they are just your opinion of yourself that is based on other people's opinions.

For example, let's take the case of failure.

Internal thought: *I am a failure because I didn't get this job interview.*

This is not a fact The fact is that you did not get an interview, but your opinion is that you are a failure. You just applied your opinion to a fact.

Once you take away your opinion, you are just left with a fact that you did not get a job interview. You can then do something about this, such as applying for other jobs, following up on other applications or using the feedback to improve yourself.

We love to take anything and use it to punish ourselves by subjecting them to our opinions. Take away your opinions, just look at the facts and then, work with what you have from there.

Society made us think this way by setting unrealistic standards. It is not entirely your fault that you think like this. But it is your responsibility to move forward. It is up to you to deal with these thoughts and let go of your unhealthy beliefs.

2. Meditation

Meditation is a great way to sit with your thoughts and feelings. We were always taught to hide our feelings and be strong, but this only leads to mental health issues. Instead, we should learn meditation.

It is not just sitting down and closing your eyes and thinking of nothing. But it is more about giving your mind a break so it can relax and breathe for a moment.

Meditation is one of the best things you can do due to its numerous benefits. Read this article to know more about the benefits of meditation: [How Meditation Can Help to Improve Your Productivity](#).

3. Emotional Clearing

Emotional clearing is about being with your feelings, and feeling them fully and letting them go. Your thoughts are rooted in your emotions. Sit with them; negotiate with them.

What is an opinion? What is a fact? What is helpful? What is not? Why are you feeling this way?

A simple way to process this is to go through all of your negative emotions and clear them systematically.

Start with *fear*: identify all your fears, feel them and reassure yourself that you are safe. Then move on and deal with guilt, shame, loss, denial, and loneliness.

If you are attempting to clear your feelings, remember that anger is just a front, a bodyguard for another feeling. So, when you are looking into your anger, try to focus on why you are sad, and you will find the peace that you are looking for.

4. Mental Correction

When you are faced with an unhealthy thought, correct yourself. Let go of the unhealthy parts of your thoughts because they do not serve you well.

Instead, replace it with a more positive statement:

I am not **insert unhealthy thought**, I am **insert positive thought**.

For example:

I am not good enough because I did not get this job interview.

I did not get this job interview, and this is okay. I am still safe, and it just means that it was not meant for me. It is not a critique of my self-worth, and I am still worthy.

5. Journaling

Journaling is a great way to process through all of your negative thoughts. Write down what your thoughts then deconstruct them.

Why do you feel that way? Is it truth or just an opinion from your preexisting belief system? How can you turn it into something positive?

Unhealthy thoughts go away when you face them and change them. Your best bet is to take their power away and reclaim it. It may be difficult to start the habit of journaling if you are not yet used to doing it. But the benefits of journaling makes it very worthwhile. To know more about how journaling can help you, you can

check out this article: [10 Ways Journaling Can Improve Your Life](#).

6. Practicing Gratitude

If you are struggling with unhealthy thoughts, practicing gratitude is one way to cure this problem. You can easily practice gratitude. You just have to sit down and think of all the things you are grateful for. You can express them, write them down or post them on social media.

Practicing gratitude is the secret to happiness because by practicing gratitude, you switch your mindset from negative to positive. This will change your feeling from lacking and not being good enough to abundance and fulfillment. If you are having negative thoughts about another person, practice gratitude and view towards that person will change.

7. Understanding That You Are Enough

You need to understand that nobody is perfect, so you do not have to be perfect. You are good enough as you are, and there is nothing wrong with that.

There is always space to grow, learn, and change, but comparing yourself to someone else will only bring you unhappiness. Succumbing to your expectations of yourself and berating yourself for failing, will bring you nothing but dissatisfaction.

You are good enough, and not everyone will see that but that does not matter. All that matters is that you know that you are good enough. Once you encourage this mindset, your life will change.

Every adversity you will face will change because your self-worth would not on the line anymore. You are enough as you are, and it is only someone else's opinion that you are not but never a fact.

8. Positive Affirmations

Positive affirmation can be very powerful, though sometimes not right away. But when you need them, they can change your perspective.

Pick an affirmation. This can be a saying, an expression or a quote that you relate to. Choose one that makes you feel strong, powerful, and positive. Write it down, and say it out loud while focusing on that feeling.

9. Identifying Triggers

External influences can trigger negative thoughts. To prevent them from happening again, identify the triggers. Start recording what you were doing when the unhealthy thoughts occur.

Identify triggers so you can either avoid them or create a healthy way to deal with them. Once you know what's throwing your thoughts off, you will be able to do something about it.

This also goes the other way. You can prevent negative thoughts by thinking of positive ones. Also knowing your 'joy triggers' will help you avoid negativity. Read this article to learn more about finding your joy triggers: [Wanna Be Happier? Know Your Joy Triggers](#).

10. Self-Care Routine

A good way to keep your mental health in a good place is to have a good self-care routine. First thing is to make sure that you exercise regularly so your brain chemistry works with you. When you exercise, your body releases Endorphins, Dopamine, Serotonin, and Oxytocin.

1. Endorphins mask physical pain and promote feelings of happiness.
2. Dopamine boosts our mood and makes us feel great. It contributes to the feeling of accomplishment and elation from completing a task, achieving a goal, or winning a game.
3. Serotonin boosts our confidence and makes us feel awesome. It also elicits a sense of pride, status, and gratitude.
4. Oxytocin invokes feelings of love and loyalty. This chemical drives us to be around people we like and trust.

Making sure you eat healthier. Eat less sugar, caffeine, and alcohol is a great way to get rid of negative thoughts.

Take care of your mental health by taking a break to feel your feelings and drawing your limits and boundaries. Creating a good healthy routine in your life with rest and recovery is the best way to help relieve the internal negative self-talk.

Final Thoughts

The most important thing is that you do not beat yourself up for having bad thoughts. They are normal, not only because of our biology but because of the society we live in. If you find yourself berating yourself for having unhealthy thoughts, practice all the steps in this article.

Lastly, take a deep breath and repeat to yourself:

This is normal. I am not perfect, and that is okay.

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