# Positive Restructuring Thought Journal

The steps for the positive restructuring of negative thoughts are provided below:

1. **Identify** the negative thought.
2. **Question** its accuracy. Find evidence that contradicts the thought.
3. **Challenge** the thought.
4. **Reframe** the thought.

# Identify

* **Pay attention to your thoughts** and emotions throughout the day. Negative thoughts often accompany negative emotions.
* **Notice the setting** you are in, the people you may be interacting with, or the activity you are engaged in **when emotions arise**. Think about any **underlying thoughts** that may be related to the emotion. For instance, if you are feeling angry, is there some associated thought like: “*he always talks down at me*.” Paying attention to emotional triggers can provide valuable clues about negative thoughts.
* Use both what is happening in the moment as well as evaluating long-standing negative thoughts, such as what you have documented in your **cognitive distortion** checklist.
* By reviewing long-standing distortions, you can **recognize patterns** as they arise in your daily thought log. Just by recognizing them, you are already starting the process of loosening their hold. Once you have shed light on them, you can start to challenge them, and eventually reframe them.

# Question Accuracy and Find Contradictory Evidence

* Are there times in your past when the thought was not true?
* Are there situations that contradict the negative thought?
* What evidence contradicts this thought?
* Is there an alternative explanation

# Challenge

* Ask rational challenging questions based on the contradictory evidence.
* Is the negative thought **really true?**
* Is the negative thought **always true?**

# Reframe

* In this step, you develop a **list of positive counter-thoughts**, that challenge and replace the negativity.
* You can also use **positive affirmations** and **compassionate statements**.
* Repeat these positive thoughts regularly to reinforce the new thinking pattern.
* When composing a compassionate statement, think about what a very close and caring friend would say to a person having this negative thought. You can use your imagination to cultivate this compassionate voice inside.

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| Thought | Setting | Emotion | Time when thought was not true | Alternative or contradictory explanation | Is the thought really true? | Is the thought always true? | Positive counter-thought | Compassionate statement |
| Use a thought as it is happening or evaluate a long-standing thought. | Is there a typical setting associated? | Is there an associated negative emotion (e.g., anger?) | Think of a time when this thought was not true. | Is there an alternative or contradictory explanation? | Based on the last two columns, can you rationally say this thought is true? | Is the thought always true, or are there times when it has not been so? | Write down a positive counter thought. | What would a close, caring friend say in response to this negative thought? |
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