



***Enhanced Learning  
Educational Services***  
*“the study skills specialist”*

# LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE



To achieve your best academically you need to make the most of all feedback from any tests or examinations.

- You should read each point and **highlight the key phrases** in that point.
- Discuss with a friend or parent as you read through the handout.
- You may like to work through this over a number of sessions.

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# 1. THE POWER OF THOUGHTS

*We have the power to notice and direct our thoughts.*

## Types of thoughts:

- Opinions – both those you express aloud to others and self-talk that goes on inside your head.
- Memories of the past.
- Observations of the present – subject you are reading about; problem you want to solve; task you are working on.
- Ideas about now or the future.

## Thoughts have an energy and can be:

- Negatively charged and make you feel bad when you think them.
- Positively charged and make you feel good when you think them.
- Neutral where no feeling is involved, eg when you are simply focused on a task.

## The power of thoughts:

- What you think, you become.
- Thoughts evoke emotions – how you feel determines how much or little you are enjoying your journey through life.
- Your aim should be to reduce time spent thinking about things that make you feel bad and ultimately to convert those thoughts into things that make you feel good.
- Don't dwell on past failures or unhappy experiences – this is an easy way to feel like a failure. Let past experiences stay in the past.



## You CAN change your thoughts:

- Meditation is a means of quietening your mind and stopping negative thoughts.
- Consciously and deliberately choose good-feeling thoughts with activities such as daydreaming positive things, or writing a 5-10 minute script to describe some aspect of your life in positive terms where problems are solved and relationships are healed.
- Think about and list all the things in your life right now that you appreciate and see as positive.
- Dismiss negative thoughts when they occur. Don't get angry with yourself for having a negative thought, instead start to practice filtering the negative thoughts out and replacing them with positive thoughts.



*a. Do you ever notice the thoughts in your head? Are you conscious of when you have negative or positive thoughts? Have you tried dismissing negative thoughts?*

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## 2. SELF-TALK

### Definition of self-talk:

- Self-talk is your inner conversation with yourself, inside your head.

### Become aware of self-talk:

- Everyone has an inner voice that talks to them hundreds of time a day – what is the tone or attitude of your inner voice? Is your inner voice encouraging and loving or is it critical and judgmental?



### Why is it important to have a positive inner voice?

- Self-talk has an enormous effect on our personal well-being and feelings of self-esteem.
- Self-talk that is critical and negative leads to firmly entrenched beliefs of unworthiness, lack of confidence and feeling unlovable and unloved.

### Managing self-talk in a kind, supportive way:

- Firstly, start becoming consciously aware of the tone and manner of your inner voice.
- If you don't like what your inner voice is telling you then make a decision to stop it.
- Each time you catch your inner voice making a negative/unhelpful comment, say the word 'stop' out loud.
- Remind yourself of the positive steps you are going to take to change your thoughts and self-talk.



*b. Do you ever notice your self-talk? Have you ever tried to re-direct or change your negative thoughts? Do you think this might be worth trying?*

## 3. PERSONAL VALUES AND BELIEFS

### Definition of Beliefs:

- A belief is something you hold to be the truth, something you accept to be real.
- You create beliefs by processing the events and experiences of your life and giving them a meaning. A belief is therefore a thought that you have been habitually thinking for so long that you have come to accept it as truth.

### Belief systems and the imprinting period:

- From the age of 0-7 we are in our 'imprinting' period, that is we believe what we are told by others or what we interpret to be the meaning of events or experiences as we are too young ourselves to be able to evaluate and reason with logic and to reject data. Much of the data we were exposed to in our early imprinting period forms the basis of our belief system.
- As we grow older we add more data and we may have rejected some of the information that other people wanted us to believe, therefore forming our own beliefs.

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