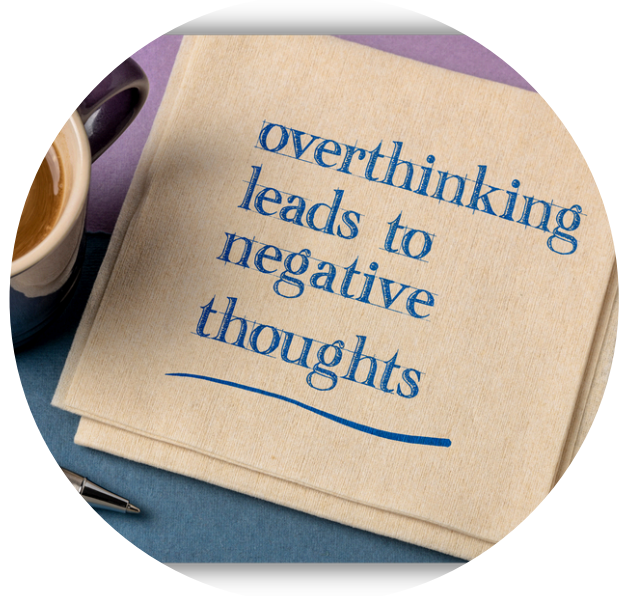# Thinking Negatively

1 Warmer

Do you agree or disagree with the two quotes? Explain why.

"A negative mind will never give you a positive life."

"With no positivity, there is no hope; with no negativity, there is no improvement."

What do the phrases 'A glass half-full and a glass half-empty mean?

How do you see the glass?

Half-full - positive views

Half empty - negative views

2A Listening

Watch the <u>video</u> up to 1:00 and answer the question.

What's the goal of Alison Ledgerwood's research?

To understand what happens when you switch from thinking positively to negatively and vice versa

Watch the rest of the video and answer the questions.

1.What happened the first time the researchers told groups A and B about success & failure rate?   **Group A reacted positively, group B negatively**

2.What happened the second time the researchers told groups A and B about the success & failure rate?   **Group A reacted negatively, group B remained negative**

3.Why was being negative important according to evolution?
   It protected and kept us aware of danger

4.What can we do to stop negative thoughts according to the video?

   Spend time thinking about positive things in life

3	**Listening 2**

Listen to the video again and fill in the gaps on the text

Your Brain on Negative Thoughts. Here's How We Change It.

Okay, so you got a new sweater. It looks great and you're getting tons of compliments. But then just one person says something snarky about it and even though you got all that praise, you can't help but stew over the negative comment. Why is that? Why does our mind seem **to dwell** on the negative?

A lot of my research focuses on how people tend to get stuck in particular ways of thinking and what enables them to get unstuck.Alison Ledgerwood is a psychology professor at UC Davis. I get to study how humans think and how we could maybe think better.

We all know the expression about seeing a glass as half-full or half-empty. It isn't just what you see but how you see it. And the way to describe that glass to people can really change how they feel about it. Alison wanted to know what happens when you try to switch your way of thinking from the positive frame to the negative frame — or vice versa.

Her research team brought two groups of people into the lab and told them about a new surgical procedure. Group one was told that the procedure has a 70% success rate. For group two, they framed it as a 30% failure rate. It's the same exact procedure and they're giving you the exact same information, but one doctor is focusing on the part of the glass that's full and the other doctor is focusing on the part of the class that's empty.

So, no surprise: people like the procedure when it's described in positive terms, and they don't like it when you focus on the failure rate. But then the researchers **point out** to the first group that you could also think of the procedure as failing 30% of the time. Suddenly people didn't like it anymore. And when they tried a similar thing with group two, pointing out that the procedure had a 70% success rate, people didn't change their mind. And over and over again in studies like that we find that people seem to get stuck in the negative way of thinking about it, and it's hard for them to flip and focus on the positive.

So once you frame something negatively, it really sticks. "It makes sense from an evolutionary or functional perspective that our minds are built to look for negative information in the environment and to hold on to it once we find it.

Imagine your prehistoric ancestors. You don't want to forget that there might be a predator lurking around. In many situations, we want our minds to be grabbed by the negative information so that we can fix problems when they're there." But then there are other situations, where we want **to get over** some small imperfection or a bit of bad news, when it's not helpful **to fixate** on the negative. What do we do then? What I really take away from this research for my own life is that it's difficult to see the **upside** and that it takes work, literally, that we have to put effort into looking at the bright side of things. So we can't assume that our mind is just going to do that automatically and that it's very easy to just keep tilting back toward the negatives.

And this is something you can **counteract** with practice. Like, spending a few minutes each day thinking about the things you're grateful for. Doing this regularly can help it become a habit. And it turns out that this negative bias can change over time. Remember when you were younger and any bad experience
felt like the end of the world? So this kind of pervasive negativity bias starts **diminish** and so in our research we find that the stickiness of a negative frame seems to disappear entirely by the time people are in their seventies. They seem to flow back and forth between negatives and positives much more easily.

So maybe that's something we can all be grateful for — that there are actually some good things about getting older. How do you **get out of** negative ways of thinking?

4 **Vocabulary**

Match the vocabulary from the text to the correct definition.

upside - Something positive

counteract - To reduce or stop an effect by doing an opposite action,

diminish - To lessen the level of strength, power, success, etc

fixate - To become obsessed, very focused on something or someone

point out - To highlight, talk about mention something important

get over - To recover from sickness, upsetting experience or news

get out of - To leave; escape from an unpleasant situation.

dwell on - To think, speak, etc. about something unpleasant for a long time

Practice

Complete the sentences.

1. Losing a pet is an awful experience. It takes a long time **to get over** its death.

2. Is there a way **to get out of** this contract? This is the worst company we've worked with.

3. My son is **fixated on** this new cartoon on TV. He re-watches it several times a day.

4. When I opened my own business, my parents **diminished** my success by telling me it won't work. I don't tell
   them anything now.

5. I can't spend a lot of time with Megan. She always **dwells on** the past and doesn't think about the future.

6. The best way to **counteract** the virus is to create a vaccine. This will stop the effects.

7. There are several **upsides** to traveling. Eating new food, and meeting new people are a few.

8. The CEO was very upset with our office. He **pointed out** every single problem he saw.