Hope for Mental Health
Community

Wellness Tool
Improving Self-Talk Worksheet

April 28, 2019

ASSESS

> **THOUGHT:** What thought just passed through my mind?

> **EMOTION:** What emotions can I identify that are connected to that thought?

> **REACTION:** What is my reaction or behavior as a result of that emotion?

Ask yourself: Am I getting things **out of proportion?** For example, "I am all/100% bad", rather than "I need to work on getting better at..."? Am I **personalizing, overgeneralizing,** etc. ("I always... I never...")?

ANALYZE

> What is the evidence **for** this thought?

> Is there any evidence **against** this thought?

Ask yourself: How has thinking this way been **helpful** in life so far or **toxic/harmful** to me? If harmful, is there a **different way** I can think about this situation/myself/others?
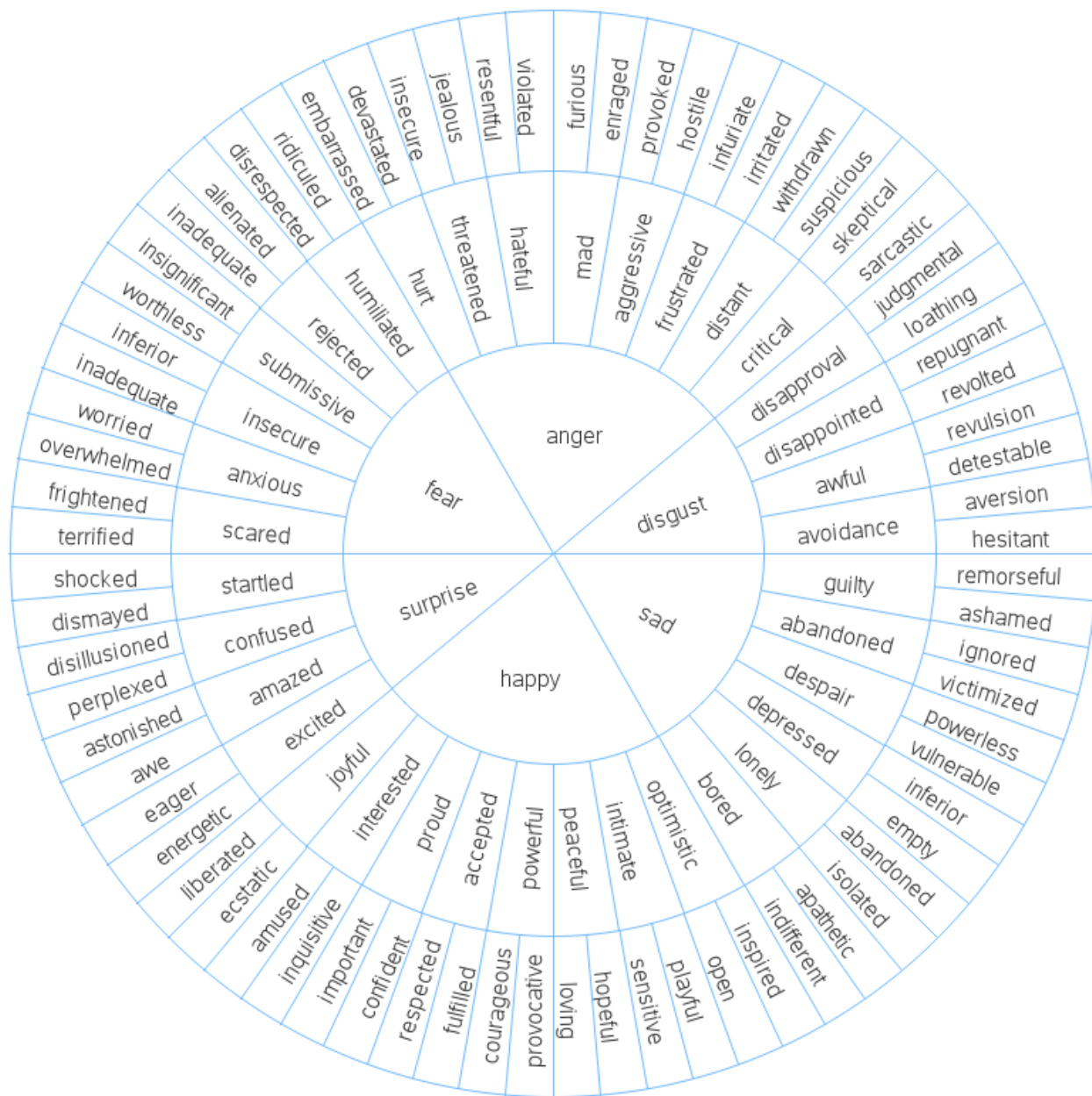
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ADJUST & AGREE

What would I advise **my best friend** if they were thinking this way?

What is a **rational, balanced, or alternative** view of this situation? (For example, moving away from extreme words such as, "always", "never", "totally", "all"...)

What is a **new thought/belief** I can agree with in my mind?

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Emotions Wheel

Emotions wheel with central emotions: anger, disgust, sad, happy, surprise, fear.

anger: hurt, threatened, hateful, mad, aggressive, frustrated, distant, critical

anger (outer): humiliated, rejected, submissive, insecure, anxious, resentful, violated, jealous, insecure, devastated, embarrassed, ridiculed, disrespected, alienated, inadequate, furious, enraged, provoked, hostile, infuriate, irritated, withdrawn, suspicious, skeptical, sarcastic

disgust: disapproval, disappointed, awful, avoidance; judgmental, loathing, repugnant, revolted, revulsion, detestable, aversion, hesitant

sad: guilty, abandoned, despair, depressed, lonely, bored; remorseful, ashamed, ignored, victimized, powerless, vulnerable, inferior, empty, abandoned, isolated, apathetic, indifferent

happy: optimistic, intimate, peaceful, powerful, accepted, proud, interested, joyful, excited; inspired, open, playful, sensitive, hopeful, loving, provocative, courageous, fulfilled, respected, confident, important, inquisitive, amused, ecstatic, liberated, energetic, eager

surprise: excited, amazed, confused, startled; awe, astonished, perplexed, disillusioned, dismayed, shocked

fear: scared, anxious, insecure, submissive, rejected; terrified, frightened, overwhelmed, worried, inadequate, inferior, worthless, insignificant, inadequate

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Types of Distorted Thinking & Balanced Alternatives

Distorted thinking: usually seeing things in extremes; evaluating yourself, others, or a situation in all-or-nothing/always-never terms; or focusing primarily on the negative while completely ignoring or dismissing anything positive; allowing feelings to define the facts without evaluating the evidence for/against

Alternative, balanced thinking: being able to hold both positive and negative aspects of a person or situation in your mind at the same time; being open to seeing things from another perspective; taking a moment to consider the facts, not only your feelings, to create a more complete picture of reality

Catastrophizing: You believe that what has happened or will happen will be so awful and un-bearable that you won't be able to stand it. "I am going to fail and it's going to make me a failure."	**Alternative:** "I've survived challenging things before. Lots of people make mistakes, fail, and grow and learn from them. Not being perfect doesn't mean I'm a failure – I am human."
Negative filtering: You focus almost exclusively on the negatives and seldom notice the positives. "Look at all of the people who don't like me."	**Alternative:** "There ARE people who love me, and they tell me so. Not everyone gets along with everyone. It's OK for me to be unique & different."
Overgeneralizing: You perceive a global pattern of negatives on the basis of a single incident. "This generally happens to me. I seem to fail at a lot of things."	**Alternative:** "I do make mistakes, but not everything I do is a mistake." Or "I had an argument with my partner/friend, but that doesn't mean I'm a bad person – I was feeling off and had a bad day today."
Emotional reasoning: You let your feelings guide your interpretation of reality. "I feel discouraged and sad, therefore, my marriage is not going to work out. I might as well just give up now."	**Alternative:** "I can acknowledge I feel discouraged and sad. These are real emotions, but they are not facts. I can accept and tend to these feelings while still putting effort into working on my marriage/wellness/etc."
Fortunetelling: You predict the future negatively. Things will definitely get worse, or there is danger ahead. "I'll fail that exam" or "I won't get the job."	**Alternative:** "I failed exams in the past, but I've also passed some. I'm nervous I might fail, but I'll try my best." Or "Not everyone can get the job they interview for. If I don't get this one, there is another for me."
Labeling: You assign global negative traits to yourself and others. "I'm undesirable" or "He's a horrible person."	**Alternative:** "I'm not perfect, but I'm working on getting healthier/better/more at peace with myself." Or "He did something horrible. There's more to him than just that one thing – he's got some good in him, too."
Dichotomous thinking: You view events or people in all-or-nothing terms. "I get rejected by everyone." Or "It was a complete waste of time."	**Alternative:** "Sometimes people don't get along, and people don't always like me, but I'm important and valuable, still." Or "I wish I had gotten more out of that event. But I did learn something new."
Personalizing: You attribute a disproportionate amount of the blame to yourself for negative events, and you fail to see that certain events are also caused by others. "The relationship ended because I failed."	**Alternative:** "I could have done some things differently, but it takes two to make a relationship work." "Sometimes people are having a bad day, but that's not about me – they just have a lot going on and they take it out on others, including me."

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