

# Attitude Adjustment

Positive emotions are essential for change, growth, optimal functioning, health and well-being. Being positive or happy begins when you realize you can choose to convert any negative self talk that currently tends to plague your daily life. Let today be the start a new attitude that says, "I can!"

When you were dieting, dropping weight was a powerful motivator. Now that you need to maintain a new weight there are new pitfalls that often leave you feeling powerless. The following are common types of thinking that can get you in trouble fast. Sound familiar?

List any others haunting you:

<b>Rationalizing</b>	"I can eat what I want now that I hit my weight goal..."	
<b>Underestimating consequences</b>	"Walking everyday really doesn't matter to my weight..."	
<b>Deluded thinking</b>	"I blew it with that donut, might as well keep eating..."	
<b>Arbitrary rules</b>	"I was raised to clean my plate..."	
<b>Mind-reading</b>	"I will hurt her feelings if I say no to her cake..."	
<b>Exaggerating</b>	"I can't live without my chocolate!"	
<b>Justifying</b>	"I deserve to pig out—I'm so stressed!"	
<b>Emotional reasoning</b>	"I feel fat, I will never look good enough..."	

Adjust your thinking and you become more confident in your ability to maintain the behaviors needed to control your weight. To maintain a healthy weight permanently, you need to manage any self-defeating thoughts and feelings that can affect the way you behave and influence your eating.

Consider the following: even though changing the way you think may sound harder than doing Pilates or counting calories, it isn't! You can control your thoughts by changing the kinds of things you say to yourself. There are a couple of basic steps.

<b>FIRST: Examine your expectations</b> about any particular thought.
<i>Are you making a statement so strict that you are setting yourself up to fail?</i>
<b>Example:</b> If you say "I will never eat cake" and then go to a party and eat cake. Many will be distressed and decide "I am a failure. I am going to gain weight because I blew it and ate cake," which results in a feeling of being discouraged, guilty and powerless.
<b>SECOND: Try out a NEW approach and make your goals and expectations reasonable.</b>
<i>Give yourself permission to be imperfect by simply adjusting your attitude:</i>
<b>Example:</b> "I can enjoy a treat once in a while. All food can fit into a healthy diet." With a positive thought you can stay in control, adjust your next meal and be self-confident that you will be able to make healthy choices over the course of the next 24 hours to compensate.

This approach is called "reframing". Although the same behavior, eating cake, could happen in each situation, changing your thoughts about the event can change negative feelings into a positive, empowering opportunity.

**ACTIVITY #1**

**Positive feelings turn your negative thoughts around.** A positive feeling goes beyond just eliminating negativity and powerlessness. It expands our thinking, builds confidence and resilience, makes us flexible, and gives us power and control over our lives.

For the next week try to catch your negative self talk—pay attention to the situation and when it is that you start thinking judgmentally towards yourself. Try to notice the negative and write down what you were doing in this chart, what you thought and how it makes you feel. Then, focus on an alternative that would be more helpful and empowering. Consider how even a small adjustment can change your attitude and turn negative self-talk into positive and empowering feelings that put you back in control.

**Helpful Hint**

Ask a family member or friend for assistance. Tell them about your project and ask them to say “stop” whenever they hear you start to complain about something. Then write it in the chart. Maybe they can even assist you in reframing your thoughts to be positive and powerful.

Situation	Negative (Hurtful) Thoughts	How do you feel?	Positive (Helpful) Thoughts	Now how do you feel?
EXAMPLE 1: When I'm on vacation I always eat and drink too much. I worked to look good and I just gain it back.	I am not strong enough to resist all the great food when I vacation.	Discouraged. Powerless.	I know how to set reasonable limits on my eating and drinking. And, I can ask my sister to help me be careful.	Encouraged! Confident.
EXAMPLE 2: I've started skipping breakfast and overeat at lunch.	I'm slipping back into old habits. Why do I even try?	Out of control.	When I used protein supplements it made breakfast easy and I felt more energetic.	Hopeful. Refocused.
1.				
2.				
3.				

**ACTIVITY #2**

Another activity that can help you train yourself to think, feel, and be positive is to create a “blue skies” collage—in other words, one that reflects the “in a perfect world” images you would like in your life. Collect as many pictures as you can of things that make you happy. Be creative. Choose colorful paper and arrange all the pictures, then hang it up where you can see it every day. When you are happy, you will feel good, and can take better care of yourself.

Alternatively, you can make a list of positive helpful statements that really mean something to you. Carry these “good thoughts” with you on an index card, or write them on sticky notes and leave them in key places. Or consider incorporating these into your collage! For example:

- ★ I know how to make good choices.
- ★ I will do the best I can, and that's ok!