



# Balanced Thought Journal

We can sometimes think negatively about ourselves, our abilities, and our futures. But that doesn't mean the thoughts are true, and this kind of thinking can add to our stress. When you notice unhelpful thoughts happening, challenge them! Try to talk back to them with more balanced thinking. Balanced thinking isn't the same as positive thinking. It's fair and realistic thinking that looks at all aspects of a situation (the positive, negative, and neutral), not just one point of view.

## Examples of unbalanced thoughts and ways to talk back to them:

| INSTEAD OF...<br>(UNBALANCED THOUGHTS)                                                         | I COULD TRY...<br>(BALANCED THOUGHTS)                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| If I don't get the job I want, my life will be ruined.                                         | My happiness in life will come from many things. Work is only one of them.                                                                                                                                   |
| If I don't go to college/university, I'm a failure in life.                                    | My worth as a person doesn't depend on what I'm studying, my educational success, or what job I have.                                                                                                        |
| Grade 11 is when I need to make all the decisions that will impact the rest of my life.        | Decisions for post-secondary are not permanent. I'm never stuck. Many people change paths.                                                                                                                   |
| I'm never going to get the marks I need to get into the program I want. I'm going to fail.     | I will try my best and focus on the learning rather than the marks. By studying, staying organized, and taking care of myself I put myself in a position to do my best.                                      |
| I should be better than I am.                                                                  | I don't have to be perfect. No one is. I'm going to learn from my experiences instead of criticizing myself.                                                                                                 |
| My parent(s)/caregiver(s) expect me to have a certain career. I don't want to disappoint them. | I'll try my best, but I can't, and I don't control everything. There are other ways I can make my parent(s)/caregivers(s) proud too, like through the person I am, not just what I study or what job I have. |
| My sibling/friend had much better grades and was more successful than I'll be.                 | My sibling/friend and I are different people and have had different experiences. It isn't fair for me to compare us.                                                                                         |



**Ideas from the group discussion:**

Free space. Make this journal yours!



**My unhelpful thoughts and ways to talk back to them:**

| INSTEAD OF...<br>(UNBALANCED THOUGHT) | I COULD TRY...<br>(BALANCED THOUGHT) |
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**Tips:**

- ▶ Ask yourself: Is there any evidence to support my thought? How likely is it? Is there another way to think about things? Are there other explanations or viewpoints?
- ▶ Consider what you would say to a friend. Most of us would never be friends with someone who spoke to us the way we sometimes speak to ourselves. We deserve compassion and support, too.
- ▶ Try to catch yourself saying you “should” do things (I should do, act, feel better). It usually means we don’t want to do something and often just makes us feel guilty and judge ourselves. Why not get rid of it?
- ▶ Use thought-challenging for all kinds of unhelpful and unbalanced thoughts, not just those about the transition from secondary school!

