

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR THINKING

You can change fear into confidence.

By Joshua J. Perkey

Church Magazines

The words we use to talk to ourselves have a huge impact on how we feel, how we act, and what we accomplish. Wholesome language inspires; degrading language tears us down.

Just as the Olympic skier in Craig Manning's article experienced, the way we think and talk to ourselves can enhance or weaken our capability.

As you strive to live worthy of the Spirit and to rely on Heavenly Father to help you overcome self-doubt and negative thoughts, you can change your thinking. That can change how you feel, act, and what you accomplish! As it says in Proverbs 23:7, "As [a man] thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Here's an exercise you can use to help you write phrases to help change your thinking:

- 1 Pick something you want to improve—something you want to do better or something you want to change so you can become the kind of person you want to be. Write that down.
- 2 Imagine what it would be like if you actually improved that thing you wanted to improve. Write down what you're imagining, with lots of description.
- 3 Write a single statement that summarizes what you wrote in step 2. Make it as strong and straightforward as you can. This will be your new positive reminder you use to counteract the negative thoughts.
- 4 Whenever you feel doubt, frustration, disappointment, or like you are losing control over your goal, stop what you are thinking right away and use your new

reminder to shift your thinking, feelings, and actions. You'll be amazed at what you can do!

Here's an example of how a young man who struggles with self-esteem might use this process:

Old Belief

"I always say the wrong thing. No one wants to talk to me."

New Belief

"I can talk to people! Heavenly Father can help me know what to say!"

Here's some space for you to practice:

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____
- 4 Remember to use it!

YOU CAN DO THIS!

You can create positive reminders to address different situations. Below are four examples of areas of your life where changing your thinking can be a great benefit. They include relationships, health, spirituality, and finances.

Those are just a starting point. You might think of different areas that work for you, and you might want more than one positive reminder in each area. Do what works for you. But remember these three important points:

1. This process works when you use it consistently as your new belief gets challenged by your old belief.
2. Trust in God. You will accomplish many awesome things with His help, but sometimes things don't work out the way we hope. In those cases, be careful not to blame God or get discouraged. Your goal is to create a positive mental, emotional, and spiritual environment so that you can do your best and become your best.
3. Ask God for guidance. Heavenly Father loves you and will guide you in your decisions (see Luke 11:9; 3 Nephi 14:7; D&C 88:63). Prayerfully consider how to grow and change, and the Spirit will help you.

As you use this process to intentionally direct your life, you'll be amazed at how much you improve, how successful you can become, and how quickly you can achieve more in your life!

RELATIONSHIPS

Old Belief

Example: My parents got divorced, so I probably will too.

New Belief

Example: I make righteous choices that determine my future! With Heavenly Father's help, I can have a great marriage relationship and choose to be faithful to my spouse!

SPIRITUAL

Old Belief

Example: The scriptures are too hard to read. I'll just do something else instead.

New Belief

Example: I love the scriptures! I can learn to read them, strengthen my testimony, and grow closer to Heavenly Father.

HEALTH

Old Belief

Example: I hate exercise and really would rather just play video games. Besides, if I'm too weak or tired to walk a block to my friend's house, someone will just drive me.

New Belief

Example: My body is a gift from God. I can strengthen it, get healthier, and feel great about myself!

FINANCIAL

Old Belief

Example: I'll never be able to afford to go on a mission or to college. It's just too expensive.

New Belief

Example: With the Lord's help, I will find a job or another way to finance my mission! And I can earn scholarships and work my way through college! I can do this!