

Fostering Wellness Exercise

Reframing #1 (Self)

Time Required: *4 minutes*

Reframing can be focused on your inner thoughts or actions toward yourself, or towards others. Think about times when you feel bad about yourself or are struggling (eg., I spent more time than usual with a client who started telling me about a recent loss, and now I feel rushed. “I am an idiot; my whole schedule is thrown off now.”). How do you typically respond to yourself in these situations? Can you change the way you think about yourself in these situations?

You can reframe your thoughts using a few tactics. Here are a few examples illustrating how to reframe a negative thought:

- 1. Gratitude:** I learned how to speak with clients more compassionately. I am thankful that this patient taught me that I need to learn how to manage my time better.
- 2. Compassion:** She is suffering so much, at least I only have to deal with a busy day.
- 3. Acceptance:** 1 out of 5 patients will make me go off schedule at least a little.
- 4. Meaning:** I am becoming the kind of doctor I want to be even though I am running late. I am learning to manage patients well so that I am on my way to becoming the best doctor I can.

Have you ever caught yourself using the adage “a monkey could do this”? Instead of discounting the positive things you can do, or minimizing the significance of your accomplishments, instead be **compassionate** toward yourself and say: “I am very good at what I do. I am impressive and many other people want to learn from me.” Can you reframe this situation with gratitude or acceptance?

“It’s all my fault!” Many times, we catch ourselves taking all the blame for something that went wrong. While you should take responsibility for yourself and your actions, you don’t need to accept the blame for things that are not your fault. Chances are some factors were beyond your control. Use **acceptance** to tell yourself instead: “I accept responsibility for my part of the problem, but there were things beyond my control. I cannot blame myself for everything that went wrong.”

Have you ever had a fun night staying in your apartment, but felt like you missed out the next day when you heard about something cool your friends had done? We tend to beat ourselves up in these kinds of situations, even though we had a good time! Rather than let your mind be filled with negative thoughts, allow yourself to feel *inner gratitude* for a relaxing night where you could enjoy time alone or with family.

The next time you find yourself being particularly negative, think about using gratitude, compassion, acceptance, and finding *alternate meaning* to reframe the situation into a more positive one. ¹

¹ Mikey D. “A Practical Guide to Reframing Your Thoughts And Making Yourself Happier” Feel Happiness. October 18, 2012. <<http://feelhappiness.com/reframing-your-thoughts-make-yourself-happier/>>