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# CHALLENGING NEGATIVE SELF TALK

As we all return to our daily lives here at VMI, we begin feeling less than enthusiastic about the on-slaught of

tests, papers, homework, quizzes, ad nauseum. With all of these things piling up on our shoulders, it can be difficult to keep a positive outlook. The phrase 'self-talk' refers to those things you say to yourself. While you may not be able to change the situation you are in, you certainly can change the way you think about the situation and how you respond.

The problem with self-talk is that often times the things we think about ourselves are untrue. You might assume that your thoughts are fact when in reality they are simply your perceptions, and perceptions can be biased or incorrect. These perceptions can be further skewed when you are feeling anxious, depressed, or stressed out. When this is the case



When Life Begins To Pile Up on you... Challenge Negative Self Talk.

you're liable to expect the worst and focus on the negative. That is why it is important to challenge negative self-talk.

Keep an eye on the things you tell yourself and challenge some of the negative aspects. Replace irrational thoughts with more reasonable, truthful thoughts. Challenging what you think can be difficult, so be patient and give yourself some time. With practice you will get better. You will begin to notice when you think negatively and you can then adjust your own perceptions.

Whenever you find yourself feeling depressed, angry, upset, or anxious, use this as a reminder to stop and reflect on your thinking. The section below will help you check out your own self-talk and see whether your current perceptions are reasonable.

\*www.psychcentral.com\*

**Challenging Questions:** Ask yourself these 4 questions when encountering negative self-talk.

## 1. Reality Testing:

- -What evidence supports my thinking? What proof is there that it is false?
- Are my thoughts based on fact or just my interpretations?
- Am I jumping to conclusions?

#### 2. Alternative Explanations:

- $\hbox{\bf -}\ What\ else\ could\ the\ situation\ mean?}$
- If I were being positive, how would I perceive this situation?

## 3. Perspective:

- Is this situation as bad as I'm making it out to be?
- What's the worst that could happen? Is that likely?
- Will this matter in 5 years?
- Is there anything good about this situation?

#### 4. Goal Directed Thinking:

- Is thinking this way helping me feel good or achieve my goals?

# WANT TO QUIT TOBACCO? (BY THE VMI INFIRMARY)

You have good reason to.
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention the effects from tobacco abuse are related to approximately one out of every five deaths in this country each year. Tobacco abuse harms nearly every

organ in the body and is associated with increased risks of developing cancer (lung, bladder, blood, esophagus, kidney, mouth, and pancreatic to name a few), heart disease, aneurysms, strokes, high blood pressure, and chronic obstructive lung disease. The sooner you quit, the sooner your risks of these diseases start to decrease. Quitting can be difficult and usually requires help. Visit <a href="https://www.quit.com">www.quit.com</a> or the VMI Infirmary to discuss your options in tobacco cessation.