

Positive Thinking: Why Those New Positive Thoughts Feel Fake

When you start to replace your negative thoughts with positive ones, you may not initially believe these new thoughts. They may feel fake. Clients have told me that thinking these new thoughts or positive affirmations cause them to feel embarrassed, uncomfortable, or awkward.

I tell them this is perfectly normal. If you were already thinking and believing these positive thoughts, you wouldn't need to use them to replace your negative self-talk. With time and repetition, the positive statements will become real and familiar. You will start to integrate them into your belief system and eventually your old negative thoughts will begin to feel wrong.

We filter our world and our experiences through our belief systems. When we attempt to change our self-talk, and as a result our belief systems, we shake up our perception of our world and ourselves. So we resist. It is easier to continue with what we have always known, rather than throw our inner world into chaos.

Once someone starts telling you how wonderful you are, when throughout your life you have heard the opposite, it is really hard to believe this incongruent message. It does not fit with your perception of yourself. It does not fit with how you have filtered the world and made sense of events throughout your life. It is a lot easier to discount the positive comments than to rearrange and re-categorize your whole life.

For example, if I am a bad person, then dad's negative and critical comments are because I am that bad person. If I change that perception and acknowledge that I am okay and a good person after all, how do I explain or make sense of how my dad treated me? Am I willing to acknowledge that maybe it was my dad's own issues and not about me. Maybe he really didn't know how to be a parent.

Also, whenever someone questions the positive statements, I point out to them that we never questioned the negative statements when they were given to us earlier in our lives. We never said, "Gee dad, why do you think I'm stupid?" Or "I don't understand why I can't trust people not to hurt me". Instead we would just absorb them, believe them and live our life based on those beliefs. Yet suddenly when someone asks us to believe that we are smart or that it is okay to make mistakes or that we deserve to be loved; we question it and doubt it. Hmmm...

What is your fear about dreaming or thinking positive all the time? What is blocking your positive thoughts? Name it.

Make a list of positive affirmations to repeat to yourself so that you feel more positive and uplifted. Place these affirmations somewhere that you can see them on a regular basis. Perhaps on your mirror, dashboard, fridge, desk or inside your closet door.