



People, Trains and Villages: The GPS of Mental Health

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How many of you experience negative thoughts?

If you are insightful, you will admit that you do. Whether they are frequent or seldom, there is no way to prevent negative thoughts altogether, but there are many tools to rewire thoughts so that they are helpful. When thoughts are productive, they give energy that supports focus and motivation.

Your thoughts just happen. They occur based on habit. Most are connected to memory, involving emotional triggers and patterns that have been there consistently over time. When a negative thought pops up, it tends to be prompted by either an internal or external experience. Unless you are mindfully present, you may not even notice it. Your ability to direct your thinking comes from thought awareness, skillful self-talk and keeping a mindset based on helpful paradigms in your belief system.

Negative thoughts naturally occur when conflict arises, when emotional tanks are low, in competitive situations and when you are frustrated in the mastery of a new experience or skill. As a practitioner, I have spent decades working with those trying to change thoughts in order to

improve mental health. When I think of the power of mindset, I visualize three things that provide perspective: **people, trains** and **villages**.

I like to visualize our thoughts as people roaming about a train station. There are all sorts of individuals (thoughts) at this station. Some are optimistic, negative, ambivalent, emotional, pragmatic, productive, etc. As a mentally healthy individual, you get to decide which train you choose to board, each train providing transportation to the village to which you want to go. If you consider the train you board as the internal dialogue that you choose in response to your thoughts, you either hop on a train that is helpful or one that is not. The different trains take you to a mindset village that will either be positive or negative.

Your self talk — the train you board — can be one that frames any given situation in a secure, peaceful or productive way. When you board one that is based in fear, frustration or negativity, it impacts your emotional experience, leading to misery. When you take the wrong train, you end up in a story of blame, conflict, defensiveness, victim thinking, exaggeration or insecurity. You do this by how you perceive the situation and how you dialogue your way through the challenging moment. When you take the mentally healthy train, your self-talk is accountable and observational rather than reactionary. It is an opportunity to see the good in others, focusing on solutions rather than problems. This train of thinking brings problem-solving that allows your experience to be meaningful.

Your mindset — the way in which you choose to look at any given situation — is the village in which you end up residing. This village contains beliefs that allow you to see yourself and others in the best possible light, regardless of the challenge. This does not mean taking on a Pollyanna view where you are happy and positive all the time. It is a way to gift yourself the most productive story to view a situation from a secure mindset. Fear creates an unhealthy story that often leads to being better than, worse than or apathetic to what is going on around you. By nurturing thoughts that are helpful, you can reprogram your mind to think in terms of connection, curiosity for understanding and solutions.

When you learn to ask more questions in moments of frustration (rather than just give opinions), you collaborate and grow at the same time. Being healthy is about learning, not being right or being in charge.

Take time to observe your thoughts. Notice what pops up in your mind. Decide clearly to get on the productive-internal-dialogue train that takes you to a mindset village that brings peace and intention. If you are on the wrong train, you will feel it in your connection with others, your self-esteem and your sense of emotional security. The good news is that when you notice you are on the wrong train, you can get off at the next stop and board the right one. If you do that over and over, you will eventually board this train in habit, arriving easily at your destination!

BEST RESPONSES TO CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

When criticized: Thank you, I appreciate you telling me how you are feeling or seeing this situation. Your response was not helpful. This is what I need from you....

After active listening: “Here is what I am taking away from our conversation. Please tell me if this is accurate.”

When you want to give your perspective: May I tell you how I am looking at this?

Asking a difficult question: “May I ask how you are feeling (thinking) about this?”

Finding agreement even though the tone was not helpful: “While I would have preferred a different approach, I support your decision (idea, perspective).”

When you want to acknowledge value: “I really appreciate _____ about you.”

When you want to check if things are resolved: “Did I answer your question to your satisfaction?” OR “I feel good about this, do you? Is there anything we need to share before we both can move forward.

When wanting clarity: “Please say more about that. I want to make sure I understand fully.”

When you want to ask for something: “I have a request. Do you have time to talk?”

When wanting to help: “I would be willing to help with this or help in _____ way.”

When responding to an idea: “This is the value I see in what you are suggesting. Let’s look at possible barriers or concerns before we implement this approach.”

Encouraging someone to explain more (because you don’t fully understand): “What else.” Or “Please say more about _____.” “Tell me specifically how you see this or how it made you feel.”

Disagreeing with someone on their perspective: “I don’t see it the way you see it. I do appreciate your perspective. This is not something I am comfortable with or I am choosing to look at it _____ this way and I hope you can understand that.”

When needing a time commitment or deadline: “When can I expect that to be done on your end?”

Setting intentions: “What are your expectations in this conversation? Would you like to know my expectations as well?”

When it starts to escalate toward negativity: “I can tell this conversation is starting to escalate and that is not helpful to either of us. Let’s take a break and come back to it when we are both ready. “

When agreeing to disagree: I don’t see things the same way you do. But because of the circumstances, I will agree to commit and give it a chance. OR...I need to think about this some more to process it fully. Can we meet again in a few days and try this conversation again?



Life Coach offerings

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TRAINING AND EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

Arbinger Training for all new hires - in person and remote during your first year.



Arbinger's training programs prompt participants to become deeply aware of their mindsets and discover the implications and impact of an inward mindset on their work. Arbinger's programs also equip participants with practical tools for implementing an outward mindset approach on an ongoing basis.

GROUP TRAINING OFFERED - SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

- SKILLS FOR SUCCESS groups that run monthly for all employees of all shifts - these offerings are elective. Watch your email to sign up. Topics include:
 - **4 Part Series on Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace**
 - **Self Awareness Skills**
 - **Self Regulation Skills**
 - **Social Awareness Skills**
 - **Relationship Management Skills**
 - **Retraining Negative Thoughts**

- **Priority Management, Focus and Boundaries**
- **Leaning into Uncomfortable Conversations**
- **Managing Grief and Helping Others through the Grief Process**

OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE:

- Has online resources to assist employees (through Namely) for educational materials and handouts on relevant topical issues in the workplace and home (i.e. on parenting, relationships, communication, coping skills, focus, etc)
- Referral source for outside professional providers (Family counseling, Alcohol and drug abuse needs, support groups, speciality doctors, etc)

INDIVIDUAL COACHING AND COUNSELING:

- Sees employees individually for behavioral health needs, both on site and virtually for remote employees. Can work on behavioral health needs, trauma recovery and develop skills in their jobs, personal wellness, conflict in home/work relationships, or develop leadership and career needs.
- All level coaching-supervisors, managers, executives on personal development issues.
- Provides training to supervisors, managers, and training specialists to help them manage people issues that arise.

How to access Life Coaching Services at Delta

Employees are asked to email the Life Coach (holly.schneider@uscca.com) providing first and last name, email address, and cell number to be added to the confidential portal where they can request 30 minutes sessions at their convenience. A full evaluation of needs is provided at the first session, identifying skills to develop based on needs. Employees can be seen as often as they choose based on their initial and ongoing plan. Progress towards goals are reviewed regularly.

Securely Retrained Thoughts

Insecure / Secure

I am less attractive than others.

I accept myself as I am.

I can't express my emotions because I might slip into an emotional breakdown.

I can handle moments when I feel fragile or emotional inside.

I am a disappointment to others.

Disappointing happens in life. I can handle that.

When people compliment me, they don't really mean it.

I appreciate when others see my strengths.

I won't succeed, so why trying.

Never give up. Perseverance is a healthy virtue.

I am stupid for feeling this way.

All people struggle with emotion. I will focus on managing this well.

I am not good enough. Others are better than me.

I am enough, not better or worse than anyone else.

I don't like myself.

I choose to accept myself for who I am.

I am not worthy of attention or recognition.

I am worthy, not better or worse than others.

I am broken inside.

I am resilient and growing.

I am unlovable.

I am capable of giving and receiving real love.

I need to make others happy.

I make myself happy. Others make themselves happy.

Saying NO is selfish and it will upset others.

I can choose to say yes or no, based on my needs.

I must avoid situations that make me uncomfortable.

I will lean into uncomfortable feelings and work through them so I grow.'

I can't manage my emotions.

I am learning how to regulate my emotions. It takes time and I will master this eventually.

I can't change. This is just who I am.

I can change whenever I decide to. I have choices.

Why should anyone like me; I don't even like myself.

I choose to like myself. I like me, those who matter will like me too!

I need attention from my loved ones in order to feel secure.

I can feel secure even if others are not paying attention to me.

Never let anyone see when you are afraid.

It is okay to have moments of fear. It's normal and healthy to acknowledge your fears.

I need to stay busy constantly so I don't think about my problems.

I need to work on balance. It is healthy to slow down and work through feelings.

I need to be perfect.

I don't have to be perfect, just balanced.

I am not as smart as others.

There are many forms of intelligence. I am smart about _____.

Nothing ever works out for me.

Everyone struggles. I am strong enough to handle my problems.

I will never get better.

I will continue to work on being the best version of me.

I need to avoid emotional pain and stress.

I am strong enough to manage this pain and regulate my stress.

I overreact to criticism. It makes me defensive.

I can handle criticism. Sometimes I am wrong. Sometimes others are wrong.

If certain things wouldn't have happened, then I wouldn't feel this way.

I can only focus on what I have control over, which is me.

It is hopeless.

I choose to be hopeful. I can make my life better each day by following healthy choices.

Anxiety makes me abnormal.

Anxiety is a superpower. When managed well, it makes me strong.

Happiness is when others get along and there aren't any problems.

I can be happy even when problems are going on.

I can't let go of the negative events from my past. They will always control me.

I choose to work through my past. It makes me stronger.

If I had more money, all my problems would be solved.

Money will not give me happiness. Happiness comes from consistent healthy living.

God is punishing me for my mistakes.

God loves me in spite of my mistakes.

I need to make others understand my view.

I am OK with my choice/belief, even if others don't agree with me.

I am a loser.

I am secure with who I am.

It doesn't pay to be happy because something bad will eventually happen.

When bad situations happen, I choose not to let it steal my happiness.

I am not as attractive as others.

I am secure with myself, both inside and out.

No one really forgives me for my mistakes.

I forgive myself for past mistakes. Trustworthy people will forgive me too!

If someone in my life is unhappy, I am sure it is my fault.

If someone is unhappy, it is their issue to work through, not mine.

If I were smarter, I wouldn't have so many problems.

All people face problems in their life. It has nothing to do with intelligence.

I don't fit in like others do.

I don't have to "fit in" to feel good about myself.

If someone hurts me, I will never trust them again.

I can recover from any hurt if I choose to work through it.

It's wrong to be angry.

It's not wrong to be angry. How I manage my anger is what matters.

My opinion does not matter.

I can share my opinions appropriately.

I am scattered and disorganized.

I can choose to follow a healthy routine and focus.

I hate my body. I am not as beautiful as others.

I am beautiful inside and out. I choose to accept myself fully.

I can't handle it if people don't like me or if they reject me.

Not everyone has to like me or agree with me.

If I want something done correctly, I have to do it myself.

I can accept if things are not done perfectly. Cooperation is more important.

I can't stand up for myself in fear of hurting or offending others.

I can skillfully stand up for what I believe so I stay true to myself.

I need validation from others in order to feel good.

I need to validate myself. Validation from others is not necessary.

It is my parents' fault that I am so screwed up.

I am letting go of my past and moving forward because I am resilient.

Asking for help is a sign of weakness.

Asking for help is a sign of wisdom and strength.

Everything irritates me.

I can change my thoughts and build tolerance with my irritations.

You can't trust people.

People earn trust through consistent behavior. Give them a chance to do so.

Others make me angry

Others can not make me feel anything. I choose how I think, feel, and choose.

Tips for Safely Returning to Work

Returning to work after a quarantine has its own set of challenges as much as working remotely does. Many of us will be excited to return to Delta's headquarters, missing the buzz of energy that Delta brings to each employee every day. But returning to work after being quarantined for the past few months may be a little unsettling. Most of us have become accustomed to working in the comfort of our homes, wearing comfy clothes and escaping interruptions. Some of you may carry concerns about illness, the second round of a COVID-19 outbreak or the quality of organizational precautions to protect us.

We all play a role as we return to a new normal. Here are five helpful tips to keep you thriving emotionally as we transition to working on-site again.

Leave Your Fears Behind

Focus on how you will be contributing positively to our business, our workplace and your coworkers. We all play an essential role in keeping Delta running smoothly. Yes, there will be some challenges, but life is about facing them, overcoming them and recovering from them. Your mindset is the most important tool you own; it's what will allow you to face these challenges.

Don't be afraid to share your *rational fears* with those around you. These fears are genuine concerns about safety measures and new protocols. Sharing these will help you make a safe and productive transition back to work. On the other hand, *irrational fears* cause harm to both you and others. Irrational fears about the pandemic whittle away at your confidence and energy, creating fatigue and disconnection from those around you.

Identify any irrational fears or concerns that you may have so you can let them go. Focus on what you *can* control: doing your job with the best mindset and to the best of your ability. Don't get bogged down in negativity, even if you don't support how things in this pandemic are being handled. We have choices. We influence change best with optimism and solutions, not with complaints or negativity.

Expect Some Anxiety

You can expect to have some anxiety about returning to work. It's normal. You are going from a comfortable and casual setting (your home) to a more social and professional environment (the office). This requires remembering your boundaries and keeping your bar set high. The initial anxiety about returning to work will fade with time as you return to your usual routine.

Fall Back on Delta's Core Values

Use Delta's Core Values as your guide to navigate through this time of uncertainty. The values encapsulate your experience at Delta and will be useful in the transition back to work. If you are experiencing difficulties of any kind, be open and honest about them with your manager. Support will be provided. We are family here at Delta. I can't stress this enough. That's why we have life-coaching support available for all employees.

Create a Workspace of Productivity

Having a clear, intentional zone for you to be productive is helpful in creating high engagement and meaningfulness in your work. Put up positive messages around your workspace so you are directing your day on the right path. Make sure you are doing things that expand your skills and help you to grow professionally. This is a part of leadership. We are all leaders here at Delta. Lean into these experiences as they create energy in your job.

Establish a Clear and Healthy Routine

Have a clear and healthy routine with regular self-care behaviors. Those who have a structured routine that incorporates focus time, time to workout, healthy eating/meals, meaningful hobbies, small breaks to recharge focus and motivating resources are happier at work and home. It permits these individuals to find a balance. This is wellness at its best.

Welcome Back!

Embrace the transition. Change only makes you a stronger and better person! Remember, our purpose is in saving lives. We must put our (pandemic) mask on first!