Advanced Self Talk

Learn About the Most Common Mental Landmines and How to Effectively Counter Them
Which of these apply to you?

- Sometimes you lack self confidence
- You feel bad when bad things happen
- Emotions affect your performance from time to time
- Don’t always understand the feelings you have
- Wish you felt better and happier more often
- Don’t have total control over your emotions
- Allow others actions or communications affect how you feel
This Drill’s Outcomes

1. Understand the destructive power of negative Self Talk.

2. Learn how to effectively counter the 14 most common “Mental Landmines” we encounter.
Why is this Drill Important?

Your Self Talk is critically important to your self confidence and overall performance.

This Drill Will Help Increase Your:

CONFIDENCE • MENTAL TOUGHNESS
REVIEW: What is Self Talk?
What we say to ourselves in our minds

- NO, I can't!
- NO, I can't!

- Yes, I can!
- Let's do it!
REVIEW: Why is Self Talk Important?
Self Talk greatly affects your confidence and emotions which impact your performance.
What About Negative Self Talk?
Because **Self Talk** Thoughts Become Reality…

**CHOOSE YOUR THOUGHTS WISELY.**
Negative Self Talk Creates a Negative Reality
How Can You Avoid Negative Self Talk?
First and Foremost, Try Positive Self Talk
But Sometimes...

Negative Thoughts Creep Into our Heads
There are common types of these negative thoughts.
We call these Mental Landmines because they often come by surprise and can quickly cause damage.
IF you can learn to combat these Mental Landmines, ALL aspects of your life WILL IMPROVE!
Introducing the 14 Most Common Mental Landmines
The Mental Landmines

1. Absolute Thinking
2. Overgeneralizing
3. All or Nothing
4. Catastrophizing
5. Should
6. Must
7. Jumping to Conclusions
8. Mind Reading
9. Fortune Telling
10. Everyone Else
11. Negative Bias
12. My Past
13. Critical Self
14. Compare and Despair
Get the Worksheet

Print this out and fill out your frequency of encountering each of the 14 Mental Landmines

Click here for Worksheet

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**Advanced Self Talk**
Mental Landmines and How to Counter Them

You have learned that certain thinking patterns lead to emotions and actions. When thinking becomes clouded, things don’t go smoothly. People are prone to negative thinking. This type of thinking leads to negative emotions and actions that neither help the situation or make one feel better. We call the most common negative thinking encountered “mental landmines” because they often come unexpectedly and can cause serious damage.

The good news is that you can feel better and command your emotions by thinking straight. This worksheet will teach you how to counteract the mental landmines. When the situation occurs that triggers one of your mental landmines, you will be given a strategy to combat this. You will have to practice many times before the counter or new way of thinking comes naturally. Like any habit, it will take time to develop. But you will be motivated to practice because the counter often leads to immediate positive emotions. In other words, you start to feel better the moment your thinking starts to change.

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Read through the document to rate how often you encounter the most common mental landmines. Total up your scorecard on the last page, the higher the score, the more you have to gain by learning these countering skills. Take note of those you encounter more often & how you can avoid and overcome those in the future.

**AFTER:** Do the 7-Day Mental Landmine Countering Journal worksheet to document your efforts to counter the mental landmines you encounter. Once you are able to better counter these mental landmines, you will have a much easier time reaching your full potential in athletics and life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Absolute Thinking</th>
<th>8. Mind Reading</th>
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#1 Absolute Thinking

Reacting to a situation with extreme thinking that includes using words like always, never, everything, nobody, etc.

Examples

• A classmate rejecting an idea you had for a group project leads to the thought: “Nobody ever listens to me, I never get what I want.”

• One bad call in a game results in the player thinking: “We always get cheated by the referee.”
#2 Overgeneralizing

Allowing one single situation to trigger a thought that applies to many past and future situations.

**Examples**

- A person makes one mistake and concludes: “I am a total failure” or “No matter how hard I try, I always screw it up.”

- A student gets a bad grade and concludes: “I guess I am terrible at school.”
#3 All or Nothing

When people see things as black/white and rate things as good/bad, it leads to an over-reaction to things. There's no gray area or in between. A single setback is seen as total defeat.

Examples

- Thinking: “I got a 65% on the first test, I am going to fail the class now.”
- Thinking a big win is “the greatest moment of your life” while a tough loss is “the worst moment of your life.”
#4 Catastrophizing

When one reacts to any negative or unpleasant situation by labeling it as horrible, awful, terrible or generally considering any negative experience a disaster, even if it is relatively minor. Or, imagining or believing that the worst possible thing will happen.

Examples

- Thinking: "I got a 65% on the test, not only will I fail this class, I will never get in college and will end up working my whole life at a fast food restaurant."

- Someone who has difficulty catching their breath after running hard and thinks: “I can't catch my breath, I might have lung cancer.”
#5 Should

When a person continues to remind oneself of all the things one should, or ought to do. These might not be urgent. But these thoughts tend to nag the person and lead to guilt. If a lot of these are going on at once, the person feels a great deal of pressure, as if one is overwhelmed by how many things need one’s attention.

Examples

- Feeling guilty because you feel you “should” be doing extra reps after practice, but have not been.

- If you do engage in the action that you “should” be doing, it makes you feel resentment or some kind of other negative emotion because you don’t really want to do it.

- Even at the best, you feel a temporary reprieve from guilt, which will soon creep back in instead of feeling good about finishing your "should".
#6 Must

When people think in the Must mode, they only give themselves one option: they must meet the expectation or else. This causes huge pressure before and during the event. If the event does not meet the expectation of what must happen, then the event is seen as a complete disaster with very negative emotions attached. In the rare circumstance when the event does meet the “must” expectation, the most positive emotion is barely neutral, rather something along the lines of relief.

Examples
- I must get an A in this class
- I must play perfectly in the game
- We must win this upcoming game
#7 Jumping to Conclusions

Studies show that most people are not good at accurately predicting odds or probabilities towards outcomes of future events. This can lead to people blowing things out of proportion or to make connections that aren't really there. Even when people have no or very little factual basis, they will come to a (faulty) conclusion. This conclusion leads to negative feelings and behaviors.

Examples

• A person is in a situation where their friend doesn't answer their text concludes “I guess we’re not friends anymore.”

• An athlete sees two teammates huddled closely together and talking. The athlete jumps to the conclusion: “They are talking about me.”
#8 Mind Reading

Assuming we know what other people are thinking (usually about us). This kind of self talk is usually negative and typically leads to bad feelings.

**Examples**

- A student gets a bad grade and thinks: “the teacher must think I am a bad student or that I didn’t try on this assignment.”

- An athlete makes a mistake and thinks: “coach thinks I don’t care about this game because I just made a mistake.”
#9 Fortune Telling

The mental trap of thinking one can predict what is going to happen in the future. Usually, the predictions are negative and cause bad feelings.

**Examples**

- A person thinks: “I didn't win the award the last time I was nominated so I won't win it this time either.”

- A person thinks: “I don't want to go to the party tonight because it will not be any fun.”
#10 Everyone Else

Also called the conformity bias. It's the belief that: “If everyone else is doing it, so should I.”

**Example**
- Some of your teammates aren’t putting in much effort during a drill when coach isn’t watching. Everyone Else thinking would lead one to believe that: “I should also slack off when coach isn’t watching because that’s what everyone else is doing.”
#11 Negative Bias

Most people tend to be more negative than positive. In thinking about a situation, we tend to notice the negative elements more than the positive ones. This is called negative bias.

For instance, in the Catastrophizing and All or Nothing landmines, we tend to presume the most negative or unfavorable possibilities.

**Examples**

- Thinking: “Coach isn’t going to play me in the game today” just because you made a mistake in practice yesterday.
- Thinking: “I got a 65% on the test, I am going to fail the class” without taking into account the other good grades you received on other assignments.
- Making a mistake and thinking: “I am a terrible player” and not choosing to also focus on the good plays you made earlier in the game.
#12 My Past

Past negative experiences can affect how one feels today. This can be when a thought pattern focuses on the negative elements of the past experience and incorporates a belief that the person must continue to feel pain because of what happened to them. Or, a current situation triggers a bad memory that causes distress right now.

**Examples**

- Thinking you need to feel bad because someone criticized your abilities last week, last month, or even last year.
- Still feeling terrible about playing your sport ever since your mistake that cost the team the championship last year.
#13 Critical Self

Putting ourselves down, self criticism, blaming ourselves for events or situations that are not (totally) our responsibility.

Examples

• After the team loses a close game, thinking: “It is my fault we lost because I missed that one shot early in the game.”

• Thinking: “I’m not surprised I got a 65% on the test, because I am stupid.”
#14 Compare and Despair

Seeing only the good and positive aspects in others, and getting upset when comparing ourselves negatively to them. These types of comparisons usually arouse highly negative feelings.

Examples
• “I wish I was thin like Josie. It’s not fair. She eats junk food all the time!”
• “Alex is so smart, he got an A when he didn’t study as much as I did and I got a B!”
• “I am probably not going to make the team this year, everyone else got better and I stayed the same.”
Mental Landmines Scorecard

Go to the last page of the worksheet and tally up your Mental Landmine “Danger Zone” score.
# Mental Landmine Danger Zones

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Danger</th>
<th>Danger</th>
<th>High Danger</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scores 0-4</td>
<td>Scores 5-9</td>
<td>Scores 10+</td>
</tr>
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- **Low Danger**: Scores 0-4
  - Won’t encounter Mental Landmines too frequently.
  - Keep up with the ones you do encounter, and be ready to counter them.
  - Help your friends and teammates that may encounter them more frequently.

- **Danger**: Scores 5-9
  - Will encounter Mental Landmines frequently.
  - Study the ones you do encounter, and be ready to counter them as they pop up.
  - Share these mental landmines with others so they can assist you when they see you encountering them.

- **High Danger**: Scores 10+
  - Will encounter Mental Landmines daily.
  - Deeply study the ones you do encounter, and be ready to counter them as they pop up.
  - Share these mental landmines with others so they can assist you when they see you encountering them.
Final Assignment

7-Day Journal

Print out the 7-Day Mental Landmine Countering Journal and fill it out over the next week.

Review with a Coach or Mentor once completed.

Click here for Worksheet
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