

How to Conquer Hopelessness: 5 Steps to Break the Pattern of Despair and Negative Thinking

We live in a worldwide society that is increasingly losing hope. The last foothold, the remaining anchor for many, was the economy -- and that has spectacularly failed over the last year. In addition, the current uncertain political system worldwide gives very little security to anyone. In light of so many things going wrong in the world, hopelessness has struck deep into the core of both young and old...and the world looks dark and bleak for many.

How can you get yourself out of this quagmire of hopelessness? How can you, in these uncertain times, remain secure, steadfast, and calm?

The first thing to realize is that negative feelings and emotions can't be stopped -- it simply arrives in its full glory without invitation, that's natural. And also, everyone sometimes feel down and despondent. It's natural and has to do with the normal ebb and flow of our physiology.

While you can't control what type of negative emotion show up, you can control your reaction to those negative feelings and emotions. The choice is yours. What is important to note is that a negative emotion always loves to make friends with a negative thought, the more negative and dark the better. And then the two become partners in conjuring up terrible negative images in your mind. When that happens, you have an unholy trinity of negative emotions, negative thoughts, and negative images. Within a short while this barrage of negativity will trigger hopelessness.

Hopelessness is that state where I simply want to give up. I believe my circumstances can't change, that my life is over, that I will never find happiness, and everything looks dark and bleak. Hopeless individuals **believe** that their problems will never be solved and they will never succeed at what they attempt to do; they can't see the opportunities, only the failure and disappointments of yesterday.

The Key Element

Notice the key here – *at some point you begin to believe that your circumstances are unchangeable and it is like cementing hopelessness in your mind.* When this happens it doesn't matter what anyone tells you – you **BELIEVE** that your life is hopeless.

The cherry on this “Hopeless Sundae” is that you will now begin to act and talk in this hopeless manner **AND THIS IN TURN WILL TRIGGER MORE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS!**

This barrage of negative emotions will influence your thoughts and cause you to act in a hopeless manner, which in turn will trigger more negative feelings and thoughts. This is called the vicious cycle, a turbine of negativity breeding hopelessness.

A quick review:

1. A negative emotion or feeling show up unannounced and uninvited (that's normal);
2. You begin to think negatively (because you feel negative you think negative thoughts);
3. You begin to create negative images (you see your life in shambles; you see yourself lost, alone, a failure forever);
4. You make a decision that your life is hopeless (you begin to believe it as a fact);
5. You begin to act and talk negatively.

And that is how hopelessness is born and kept alive and well!

“SO, HOW DO I STOP IT?”

Right at Number Two. A negative emotion and feeling is normal and you can't stop it from showing up. Sometimes it is connected to an event that occurred such as a disappointment, a breakdown of a relationship, a failed business project, a sale you didn't make, or the loss of a job. You can't and shouldn't run away from it. **But, you should TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR THOUGHTS and prevent yourself from thinking and seeing negative images.**

TAKING CHARGE OF NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

First acknowledge if something negative happened. You can't delude yourself. If you lost your job you will feel terrible, but if you begin to think that you are a loser and see yourself as becoming homeless, you are going way too far. Other times you simply wake up feeling as if the world turned against you, unhappy, burdened, and worried. The emotions can't be stopped, but this is how you stop and take charge of a negative thought before it goes further:

1. **Stop or interrupt the negative thought** (it's your mind, you can change it) even if you have to say "Stop" out loud or slap your hand on the table, make sure you stop it.
2. **Challenge the thought** – ask yourself, "Is this really true?" or "Is it realistic to think like this?" Most of the time the answer will stare you in the face and you will realize what you are thinking is not the truth or not realistic.
3. **Change the thought by Choosing a more realistic thought** - for instance if you got laid off and begin to think, "Oh no, my life is over," change it to "This is a big setback for my life" or "I'm faced with a significant challenge." If you feel rejected after a breakup, the first thought can be, "My life is over; I will never find someone again." Stop it, Challenge it, and Change it to "I had a significant loss and I'm hurting, but I will get through this."
4. **Change the image that connected with the negative thought** - we always think in images and for every thought we automatically create images. If you fall prey to hopeless and despondent thoughts you will begin to see yourself in that position. Instead of seeing yourself lost and alone, heartbroken forever, choose another image of hope.
5. **Choose your behavior** – consciously choose to act positively and proactively. Instead of isolating and mixing with other hopeless people decide upon at least three positive things that you can do: For instance if I lost my job I can sit down with other jobless people and bemoan the state of the workforce and the economy and how hard things are or I can sit down and update my resume for starters. Secondly, I can make a list of friends that could possibly connect me with another position and thirdly, I can scour the job market to see where there are openings. Choose three positive and proactive things you can do every day and make sure you do only that whole stopping any negative thought from growing.

The key is to stop the vicious cycle of hopelessness to begin before it becomes a pattern and forms a stronghold in your life. And as you have seen here, you have the power to stop and change your mind. **That is the wonderful thing about your mind, YOU CAN CHANGE IT!**

In my next article I will talk about the Power of Hope and how to build a Stronghold of Hope in your life. My very best wishes for your life.

Dr. Henry J. Venter is a psychologist, speaker, and author. If you found this article helpful then [subscribe](#) at www.ginomaicc.com for his free newsletter and more life changing insight. The complete transformational change program [“The Ultimate Success Guide: 7 Practical Steps to Change and Transform Your Life”](#) features an extensive and step-by-step process that leads you to the success you always dreamed of.

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