

### Lesson Name:

Positive vs. Negative Thinking

### Student Objectives:

- Understand why we have negative thoughts.
- Strategies for creating more positive thoughts.

### Educator Preparation:

- Chart paper or dry erase board
- Markers
- Positive vs. Negative Thinking Graphic Organizer

### Introduction:

Today's lesson is going to be about the thoughts in your brain and why so many of them can be negative. We are also going to learn how to shift negative thoughts to positive.

### Instruction:

Science and research tell us that the average human being has between 70,000 to 80,000 thoughts in one day. Stressed people may have up to 120,000 thoughts a day. Here's where it gets interesting. For the average human being, 80 percent of their thoughts are negative. We don't always know how many negative thoughts we have running in the background of our mind.

Think back to this morning, when you heard your alarm clock go off. Within the first two minutes, you started saying things like, "I didn't get enough sleep. I'm so tired. I don't want

to get out of bed. I don't want to do my schoolwork today”. Then you walked to the bathroom feeling grumpy and you looked in the mirror and saw a giant zit that popped out on your face, or a fever blister, or you don't know what to wear.

Here's what's kind of even crazier. 95 percent of the 80 percent of negative thoughts you have each day are the exact same thoughts you had the day before! So, your mind is doing this loop. It's having the same negative thoughts every day over and over. Why does this happen to most of us?

It actually goes back to like the caveman and ancient archaic times when we had very little food or shelter, and it was a very dangerous world to live in. People were worried about the weather because the weather could kill them. They were worried about other tribes or other groups coming to steal them or take them away or harm them. They were worried about saber toothed tigers and all that could attack them.

That part of the brain is actually called the reptilian part of the brain. And we all have it inside of us. Even though every day when we wake up, we're not really worried about whether we're going to live or die—for the most part—we know will have a roof over our heads, we know that a tiger is probably not going to kill us today, or we know that we're maybe going to get food later on. Our brain, though, doesn't know that our brain is still functioning from thousands of years ago, when it had to scan the environment all of the time, looking for danger. Our brain naturally has all of these negative thoughts.

### Interaction:

Now, here's what I want to show you about your thoughts. Your thoughts are really important—let me show you. I'm going to do a quick little exercise for you, so you can really see what I'm talking about.

So we know that we have all of these thoughts running through our heads—70,000 of them a day. And we know that our thoughts become our beliefs.

Whatever you think about the most becomes what you really believe about yourself. And so, if you have all kinds of negative thoughts about the way you look, or about how capable you are, or how smart you are, or how athletic you are, or how your life isn't what you want it to be, all of those thoughts create a belief inside of you of who you believe yourself to be. Those beliefs cause you to take action, right?

For example, if most of your thoughts are, “I really don't like myself, I don't like the way I look. I'm not smart enough, or talented enough, or beautiful enough,” then these are the beliefs that you hold about yourself. And beliefs are super powerful because belief causes you to take action. You either take a positive action or take a negative action. So if you have a negative belief, it causes you to take a negative action. If you have a positive belief, it causes you to take positive actions.

What we want to do is we want to figure out how we can rewire your brain so that most of your thoughts aren't on a negative loop all of the time. This gratitude lesson will teach you skills and strategies so that you can actually change this loop that's going on in your brain. Because you have lots of thoughts and those create your beliefs. If your brain is focused on negativity, negativity, negativity, negativity, negativity, then that's what you're going to get more of. But, when we actually begin to create a different pathway through the brain, the brain can actually learn a new way of seeing your life and the world.

### Closure:

Today we talked about the power of your thoughts and how we are wired towards negativity because of our reptilian brain. We now know we have the power to rewire the brain towards positive.

### Activity:

- Activity One
- Activity Two