



PARANOIA COPING SKILLS

Pause

Everything you do, you *choose* to do, albeit often subconsciously. You choose whether to:

- get up in the morning
- eat breakfast or not (and whether to have cereal or toast)
- smile at people or not
- drive to work or walk.

Hence, it follows that you can choose whether to respond positively or negatively to any situation.

By *pausing* before reacting; you can gain far more control over your thoughts and consequently your response to the situation. So, the first step into changing negative thought patterns into positive ones, is to *pause*.

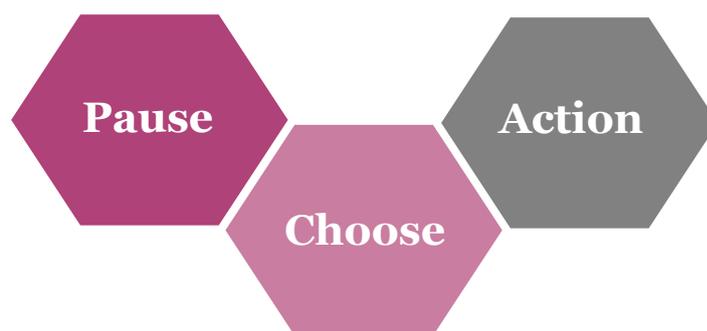
- Resist the urge to react immediately and negatively.
- Count to ten.
- Consider your choices and weigh up the pros and cons of your proposed reaction.

Choose

During the pause – which can be as long as you feel is necessary to clarify your thinking – direct your mind towards the positive response. If applicable, consciously stop yourself from thinking negative thoughts. However strange and uncomfortable it might feel at first, make yourself choose the positive reaction over the negative reaction. Whenever faced with a choice you may find it helps to think about how you would want others to treat you in such a situation. We have found that it makes life far less complicated if you follow this simple rule.

Action

Once you have chosen the positive response, *act on it*, otherwise this can become the point at which the thinking becomes 'ineffective'. Do whatever is necessary to turn that thought into words or deeds. Have faith in your choice. Do not be tempted to back down or moderate it.



Saying NO!

- Buy yourself the time you need to be assertive (or if you're not sure how you feel about a task). When someone asks you to do something say you'll think about it.
- Don't make excuses and don't give reasons: just say no. For example, you could say "No, I am sorry but I can't" or "No, I can't do it this time" or just "No, I'm sorry". This is called the "broken record" technique and is especially good for those situations where you're absolutely sure you don't want to do what you've been asked. Keeping your response this brief is a reflection of the fact that you don't need permission for your decision. You don't have to persuade anyone that your decision is the right one.
- Sometimes you'll want to show you appreciate being asked even though you're not able to help. So you might say, "It's kind of you to ask me, but I can't" or "Thank you for thinking of me, but I'd rather not".
- Be sympathetic and constructive. Tell the person you see their problem and help them to think through possible solutions – as long as they don't involve you, of course!
- Explain why you can't help, but don't fall into the trap of sounding as if you are making excuses. Remember: you have a valid reason for your decision and you don't need anyone's approval.
- Sometimes you might want to meet the person half way: "I can't do x, but I might be able to help you with y".