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Bupa Wellbeing Competition

Managing self-doubt: Don't worry, be happy

by Jun Ni Ho

Doctor of Philosophy Pharmacy & Medical Science

Self-doubt is a habitual mindset that is not uncommon for us. We often doubt ourselves, as we lack confidence in believing in our abilities and decisions. While optimal self-criticism can be a good source of motivation, excessive self-doubt can lead to anxiety and fear, preventing us from realising our full potential. However, when managed properly, self-doubt can be used as performance enhancer for self-growth and improvement. All we must do is to be more confident and learn to embrace self-doubt as part of our life journey.

Here we explore two secret ingredients to managing self-doubt:

1. Combating negative thoughts and boosting self-care

My friend who is a psychologist introduced me to an interesting concept called 'cognitive defusion'. Cognitive defusion is about being mindful of our thoughts that appear and letting them come and go rather than holding onto them. There are two particular techniques that I find useful in combating self-doubt: labelling our thoughts and thanking our minds.

We can use labels to describe our thoughts as they are just thoughts! Whenever we start doubting ourselves, try saying "I notice I'm having a thought that...". This will help create some safe space between us and the thought. Similarly, the next time a self-doubt pops into our head, we can say to ourselves "thank you for the feedback". This reminds us that we shall not take it too seriously but appreciate what that thought is trying to do instead. I can assure you that we will feel better after saying "thank you" out loud and clear.



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2. Mastering the art of self-compassion

There are various ways to practise self-compassion, including buying ourselves our favourite food, spending time with people who are optimistic and supportive, keeping and writing a gratitude journal, and practising meditation. For me, when things go wrong and I start doubting myself, I will go to a café. I will reflect and self-talk (basically engage with my inner voice) while enjoying a nice warm cup of coffee. Another way that I find helpful for untangling thoughts is visiting a bookshop. I will usually go to the self-help and motivation section, pick up a book off the shelf and start reading it.

As the old saying goes, “what doesn’t kill you, makes you stronger”. It is essential that we adopt a growth mindset and live in the present moment.

Have courage and be kind. More importantly, don’t worry, just be happy.

- ✔ SELF-CARE
- ✔ SELF-COMPASSION
- ✔ SELF-CONFIDENCE

DON'T WORRY

be happy! 

