

## Tell Your Mind What to Think

A friend once told us this amusing fact: his huge Rottweiler is afraid of cats. His story goes that when the dog was a young pup, it tried the usual dog-hates-cats snarling and snapping technique on an older cat. Unfazed, the cat coolly let the pup have his merry way. The cat probably got irritated after a while and without warning, a feline claw lashed the dog's sensitive nose. The poor dog probably felt that it was the worst pain he'll ever feel that he associated cats with it. From then on, he gave cats a wide berth. Even when he grew the size of a small horse and could probably swallow a whole cat without effort, they still lorded over him. This huge beast, which can reduce grown men to quaking, is afraid of little cute cats.

We can laugh about the absurdity of this pair but come to think of it, don't we all have our "little cute cats"? Don't we all have those little fears that shaped us into what we are now? Wasn't there a particularly painful experience that taught us to react to things in a particular way?

As little kids, we were constantly barraged with lessons on what to do and what not to do. It could be as instructional as 'don't play with matches'; 'don't talk to strangers'; 'eat vegetables' and so on. These got ingrained in your system that doing it became automatic. That's great but what if you were constantly told 'you're not good enough'; 'your grades are lower than so-and-so'; 'you're not pretty'; 'you're fat' etc.? Unfortunately, yes, this negative outlook got into your psyche too. Like a dormant computer virus, it got embedded into your programming. Let's say you were always told that you're ugly. You grew up thinking that and each time you try to improve your looks, this 'virus' creeps up and tells you 'don't bother, you're ugly'. As it has been in your subconscious for so long, you believe it and will just go on as you are. Substitute the word 'ugly' with 'fat' or 'stupid' or any of those degrading terms and you get the drift.

Would you like to go on like that all the time? Well, pretty much like a computer, you can also give your subconscious an anti-virus to counteract the negatives. The simplest way is to constantly affirm a positive mantra to drown out the negatives. You are, in fact, reprogramming yourself when you do this. Say 'I am smart and I can \_\_\_\_\_ (replace with whatever you want to do)' or whatever variation you can think of. It might take a lot of willpower, practice and time to get accustomed to this new program though. Say it repeatedly, whenever you have a free moment, until it becomes real to you. Remember that all the negatives came about because you heard it all your life. Hearing positives will work the same way.

Unlike my friend's Rottweiler, we can be smart enough to realize that we are bigger than our 'cute cats' and they better stay off our paths when we tell them to go away.

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### About the Author

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