

CELEBRATE YOUR INDEPENDENCE FROM UNWANTED WEIGHT!



*A Moment With Dr. Moore,
our PhD Psychologist/
Eating Behaviorist*

Think Yourself Thin

Weight loss can be a frustrating process! It's common to struggle with feelings of guilt, shame, and hopelessness. The psychology of weight loss tells us that when people experience these and other difficult emotions, these feelings are often preceded by a number of unhelpful self-statements and thoughts. These thoughts become automatic habits that can occur outside of our awareness. When listening to these thoughts, we may find ourselves indulging, over-eating, or otherwise sabotaging ourselves and all of our hard work! Ultimately, these unhelpful thinking styles can get in the way of achieving your goals.

Use the examples below to examine your automatic thoughts and identify any self-statements or beliefs that get in the way of your successes. You might notice some thinking patterns and styles that you use consistently. Some of these thinking style sound similar to one another. These are not meant to be distinct categories, but to help you see if there is a kind of pattern to your thoughts. Practice recognizing and challenging those thoughts that keep you stuck.

Tunnel Vision: This thinking style involves focusing on only one part of a situation and ignoring the rest. Usually, this means looking at the negative parts of a situation and forgetting the positive parts. The whole picture is colored by what may be a single negative detail.

Unhelpful Thought: "I can't believe I cheated at dinner tonight. I've failed at dieting already."

Thin Thought: "Even though I'm frustrated and disappointed that I didn't stick to my plan tonight, I did a great job all day. I have a lot to be proud of! I'm going to continue practicing sticking to my plan tomorrow."

For the remainder of this article please continue to the next 2 pages.



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Exercise Myth

You Will Burn More Fat If You Exercise Longer at a Lower Intensity. The most important focus in exercise and fat weight control is not the percentage of exercise energy coming from fat but the total energy cost, or how many calories are burned during the activity. The faster you walk, step or run, for example, the more calories you use per minute. However, high-intensity exercise is difficult to sustain if you are just beginning or returning to exercise, so you may not exercise very long at this level. It is safer, and more practical, to start out at a lower intensity and work your way up gradually.

**Doctor's Orders by Kent C. Sasse, M.D., MPH, FACS,
Medical Director of iMetabolic**

Find rewards other than food.

Once you start attaining those goals, find ways to reward yourself that don't involve a food treat. Massages, good books, movies, clothes, even just some time to relax, are all treats on their own. Use your imagination. Think of people you like to visit with or long-distance friends you haven't talked to on the phone for a while. Think of that hybrid rose you've been wanting to buy and treat yourself to it, as well as the time to enjoy planting it. Give yourself small rewards and celebrate small successes along the way.

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Mind Reader/Fortune Teller: Jumping to conclusions characterizes this thinking style. We might assume that we know what someone else is thinking or make predictions about what is going to happen in the future.

Unhelpful Thought: "I'm never going to be successful. This diet is going to fail, just like all the others."

Thin Thought: "I can't predict the future. Who says I'm going to fail? I've already made changes to my lifestyle and am starting to see improvements. That sure sounds like success to me!"

Personalization: This thinking style involves blaming yourself for everything that goes wrong or could go wrong, even when you may only be partly responsible or not responsible at all!

Unhelpful Thought: "The checker at the store was so rude to me today! What's wrong with me that people don't give me the respect I deserve? What did I do?"

Thin Thought: "The checker at the store was so rude to me today! Maybe he was having a bad day. I'll just brush it off. There's no reason to let someone else's bad attitude ruin my day!"

End of the World: This thinking style occurs when we blow things out of proportion. We might view a problem as terrible, even if the problem itself is quite small.

Unhelpful Thought: "I've really done it now. I've blown my whole diet. All my hard work has gone down the drain!"

Thin Thought: "I've been off track, but that doesn't take away all of the hard work I've done. Throwing in the towel now will only make me feel like more of a failure. It's not that big of a deal. I can get back on track. I'm going to start by going on a walk now to clear my head and focus on my goals."

"Should"-ing: Sometimes by saying "I should," you can put unreasonable demands on ourselves and others.

Unhelpful Thought: "I should exercise and eat healthy all the time."

Thin Thought: "I want to take care of myself. I chose to exercise and eat healthy so that I can reach my goals. I'm in charge here! Making healthy choices is about doing what *I* want to do and living the life *I* want, not about what someone else tells me I'm supposed to do!"

Labeling: When we label our selves or others, we make global statements based on a specific instance. We might believe something to be true, even when there is lots of information to the contrary.

Unhelpful Thought: "I'm a weak person. I have no willpower."

Thin Thought: "I'm strong in so many areas of my life. I can be strong and successful in dieting too. I've had a hard time with dieting in the past, but just because I've eaten fries on my plate doesn't make me a weak person!"

Black and White Thinking: This thinking style is characterized by all or none thinking. You are either good or bad, wrong or right, a success or a failure, or so on. There are no shades of gray.

Unhelpful Thought: "Since I cheated this morning, I've already ruined this day (or week). I'll start my diet again on Monday."

Thin Thought: "Oops! I got off track this morning. One mistake doesn't ruin the whole day. The sooner I get back on track, the better off I'll be. I'll be sure to plan a healthy lunch to boost my confidence. I know I can do this."

Developing balanced thinking is as important of a habit for successful weight loss as diet and exercise. Some of these styles might sound familiar to you. These unhelpful thoughts often lead to behaviors that are inconsistent with your goals. With increased awareness, you'll be able to catch these unhelpful thoughts before they lead to unhelpful behavior. Practice using self-talk that helps you feel more confident and better about yourself. Like any new habit, the more you practice, the easier this will become. With less guilt, stress, and frustration in your life, you'll be better able to reach your goals!