

ODJA Wellness and Mental Health Committee

March 2024 – Message

Hello everyone,

Hope this message finds you all well and looking forward to Spring.

For those of you who love winter and winter activities, it's been a bit of a disappointing winter as there was not too much snow.

For those of you and myself included, who do not flourish in winter weather, it was thankfully a bearable winter.

As seasons are changing, here is a wellness message that incorporates some reframing that may be helpful as we look forward to the rebirth of spring.

AWAKENING THE [SUN](#)

I recently read about an interesting concept about reframing one's point of view.

It stated that if you wake up with the [sun](#), you are still asleep. However if you awaken the [sun](#), then you are truly awake.

I had to read it a few times to actually understand its meaning, but then I realized that what this means is that the way our day develops is completely up to us.

If we set an intention for the day to unfold in a calm and peaceful manner, knowing that we are fully capable of dealing with whatever challenges may arise, then we are setting ourselves up for success no matter what the day brings our way. Thus we awaken the [sun](#).

Experts call this cognitive reframing.

COGNITIVE REFRAMING

It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss in detail how cognitive reframing works. However I want to provide some insight into this technique as well as some resources for you to read if the idea resonates with you.

According to experts, cognitive reframing involves:

- a) learning to recognize the thoughts that are causing a negative outlook
- b) finding evidence to discredit the thought
- c) and then replacing the negative thought with a more realistic one

For example, if a person is asked to see their boss, the person may think: "Oh I am getting fired." As soon as the negative thought enters the person's mind, they may feel the physical sensations of fear, dread, sadness and the rest of the day becomes a downward spiral into the depths of despair.

The negative thought usually comes so quickly that it's impossible to detect when it actually arrived. By the time we recognize that the negative thought is here, the body is already reacting with physical sensation.

In reality, a meeting with the boss may end up being a simple discussion about a file or a client, but the uninvited negative thought results in catastrophic scenarios where the person ends up homeless on the street.

We are innately wired to remember negative things and to think negative thoughts as a protective mechanism. If you touch a hot stovetop you will remember the feeling and will unlikely do this again.

So we need to retrain our brains to stop the negative thoughts from spiraling into fearful scenarios. That is why cognitive reframing may be very helpful in these situations.

More information about cognitive reframing may be found here: <https://www.everydayhealth.com/stress/study-says-heres-how-to-reframe-stress-to-use-it-to-your-advantage/>

STARTING YOUR DAY WITH POSITIVE INTENTIONS

In addition to cognitive reframing, here are a few simple techniques you can use to start your day in a more positive way.

1. As soon as you open your eyes, say a few words of gratitude for a warm bed that allowed you to sleep in comfort all night.
2. Before getting out of bed, set an intention that everything you do will work out in ease.
3. When you get out of bed, put on music that you love that will put you into a positive mood as you prepare to take on your day.
4. If any negative thoughts start creeping into your mind, by putting doubt with “what if” scenarios, just reframe and say to yourself, “so what, I know that I can handle anything that comes my way.” (cognitive reframing in its simplest form).
5. As you pass by a mirror, look at your reflection and say: “I love and accept myself exactly as I am. I am going to have a wonderful day.”

You may find it hard to do number 5. Many people do not feel comfortable saying nice things to themselves. However, self acceptance is the first step in loving ourselves and working on stopping the negative critic in our minds.

When we accept ourselves unconditionally, we stop judging everything we do negatively. We learn to be kind and compassionate towards ourselves, which leads to being compassionate and kind to others.

I am always happy to help create individualized plans for wellness and stress management.

Wishing you peace and calm in all your endeavors.

Your WMH Committee

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