

SELF TALK STRATEGIES FOR STRESS

[Defeat] Perfectionism: I do not need to be perfect to be safe or loved in the present. I have a right to make mistakes. Mistakes do not make me a mistake. Every mistake or mishap is an opportunity to practice loving myself in the places I have never been loved.

[Defeat] All-or-Nothing and Black & White Thinking: I reject extreme or over-generalized descriptions, judgments or criticisms. One negative happenstance does not mean I am stuck in an never-ending pattern of defeat.

[Defeat] Self-hate, Self-disgust and Toxic Shame: I commit to myself. I am on my side. I am a good person. I refuse to trash myself. As long as I am not hurting anyone, I refuse to be shamed for normal emotional responses like anger, sadness, fear and depression. I especially refuse to attack myself for how hard it is to completely eliminate the self-hate habit.

[Defeat] Micromanagement/Worrying/Obsessing/Looping/Overfutuizing: I will not repetitively examine details over and over. I will not jump to negative conclusions. I will not endlessly second guess myself. I cannot change the past. I forgive all my past mistakes. I cannot make the future perfectly safe. I will in a way that is good enough and I accept the fact that my efforts sometimes bring desired results and sometimes they do not.

[Defeat] Unfair devaluing comparisons to others: I will not compare my insides to their outsides. I will not judge myself for not being at peak performance at all times.

[Defeat] Guilt: Feeling guilty does not mean I am guilty. I will apologize, make amends and let go of my guilt.

[Defeat] Shoulding: Know the appropriate word choice of must and want in place of should.

[Defeat] Overproductive/Busyness/Workaholic: I am a human being not a human doing. I will not choose to be perpetually productive. I am more productive in the long run when I balance work with play and relaxation.

[Defeat] Harsh judgments of self & others: I will not displace the criticism and blame that rightfully belongs to my dysfunctional caretakers onto myself or current people in my life.

[Defeat] Drasticizing/Catastrophizing/Hypochondriasizing: I feel afraid but I am not in danger. I am not "in trouble" with my parents. I refuse to scare myself with thoughts and pictures of my life deteriorating.

[Defeat] Negative Focus: I renounce ever noticing and dwelling on what might be wrong with me or my life around me. I will not minimize or discount my attributes.

[Defeat] Time Urgency: I am not in danger. I do not need to rush. I will not hurry unless it is a true emergency. I am learning to enjoy doing my daily activities at a relaxed pace.

[Defeat] Disabling Performance Anxiety: I reduce procrastination by reminding myself that I will not accept unfair criticism or perfectionist expectations from anyone. Even when afraid, I will defend myself from unfair criticism. I won't let fear make my decisions.

[Defeat] Perserverating about being attacked: Unless there are clear signs of danger, I will thought-stop my projection of past bullies/critics onto others.*

*If you are in a dangerous relationship or under the threat of real danger please seek professional help. The above statement does not include situations of domestic violence and other perceived threats.

If any of the above statements apply to you, we recommend working with a trained therapist to do the additional work involved.

The information contained in this handout is from Pete Walker's book *Complex PTSD: From Surviving to Thriving*.