



January 18, 2006 – More at Midday Outline

How to Eliminate Your “ANTS”! (Automatic Negative Thoughts)

Common Problem:

- Self-destructive thoughts that can come to mind instantly.
- These negative thoughts usually fall into the exaggerated or all-or-nothing category.
- EX: “It’s awful...” “I should have...” “I must...” “I can never...”

Result:

- Stress, bad mood and other negative emotions.

Solution:

- It is possible to learn to talk back to your “ANTS” just like any other new skill.

4 Steps to Eliminate Your “ANTS”:

1. Become a student of your “favorite” irrational & negative thoughts
2. Identify and interrupt these thoughts when they occur
3. Challenge the truth of your “Ants” to neutralize their power
4. Replace them with more accurate, helpful and balanced thoughts

Example:

Instead of, “I am totally out of control and can’t live like this.”

Say to yourself, “I am somewhat out of control until this task is done and that’s OK.”

Example:

Instead of, “I feel like an idiot for forgetting that meeting.”

Say, “I’m so busy, no wonder I forgot the meeting. It’s an embarrassing but rare occurrence.”

Result:

- Improved mood, less stress, better able to continue with busy day

Also, Ask Yourself:

- “How would I encourage my best friend in a similar situation?”
- “How important will this issue seem in the future?”
- “Did I do the best I could under the circumstances?”
- “Are my thoughts a result of being physically tired, emotionally exhausted or eating poorly?”



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About Centerstone

Centerstone (www.centerstone.org), celebrating 50 years of service in 2006, is the largest behavioral healthcare provider in Tennessee and the ninth largest in the nation. A not-for-profit organization, Centerstone provides a full range of behavioral health and related educational services to individuals of all ages and their families. Centerstone is devoted to research that seeks to identify, treat and eliminate mental illness. Each year, the organization provides services to more than 45,000 individuals. The Centerstone network includes more than 60 facilities throughout the middle Tennessee region. For more information about Centerstone, please call (615) 460-4357 or toll free at (888) 291-4357.

About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone's wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone's Crisis Management Strategies.

In recent years, Ms. Gillpatrick worked for the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center in Memphis. There, she co-developed a model program for the state of Tennessee entitled, "Homicide Response." Her work in this area received the 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.