

“STINKIN THINKIN!”

HOW TO RECOGNIZE ERRONEOUS THINKING

Thinking errors cause people to think and then act irresponsibly, and everyone uses them occasionally. Thinking errors can keep you stuck in your problems. We need to avoid thinking patterns that are immature and unhealthy. Read the list below. Ask Jesus to help you identify your “stinkin thinkin” errors. Then let the Holy Spirit bring them under scrutiny and make the healthy, necessary positive changes that will change your life.

Anger - a strong emotion; a feeling that is oriented toward some real or supposed grievance or wrong. People often use anger to get out of a fix you got yourself into by blowing up at the other person. This tactic can cover, hide, or confuse the real issue and give you room to squirm out of the situation. Anger also covers true feelings that you don't want revealed.

Blaming others – this helps you to avoid taking responsibility by putting (shifting) the blame on others. It's a “cop out” from the word GO, and down the road often causes more problems; sometimes with dire consequences. “My brother told me not to tell!” or “I really didn't want to do it, but she talked me into it, it's not my fault!”

Assuming – when you assume, you take for granted that something is true, without really knowing it's so. Example: You missed the play off game because you assumed it would be called off due to rain, when in fact it wasn't. You didn't bother to check it out. Therefore, you missed the game; out pops the anger.

Lying – saying something that isn't true; deliberate act of deviating from the truth. People often lie through exaggeration or omission.

Excuse Making – a defense of some offensive behavior or some failure to keep a promise etc. “I forgot.” or “I had too many things on my mind; I wasn't sure what to do and besides, Katie said she'd teach the class.” Or “I tried, but I just ran out of time.” Or “It would have worked, if you would have done...!” Excuses are used to get out of doing things and not taking responsibility for your actions.

Image – a personal facade that one presents to the world. To hide your true thoughts and feelings; you build an image to hide behind. It could be a tough, hard, macho type or a weary, defeated victim posture. We wear lots of different masks; afraid to show the real “Me” for fear of rejection.

I'm unique – you see yourself as being radically distinctive and without equal; able to live by different rules than others because you think you are special; different. You are one of a kind and therefore, not subject to the same rules others live by.

Closed – you are closed about your feelings and thoughts; not revealing truth or telling others what's really on your mind. You are not going to allow anyone into your space; you have it fenced off with “Off limits” signs.

Minimizing – Make small or insignificant; make things sound less important or less serious than they really are. “I only did it once.” Or “I hardly ever do that.” Or “it was just a small thing; didn’t amount to anything, so why are you so upset?” or “I know I promised, but give me a break, other things came up!”

Redefining – you redefine a situation when you change the way it seems to have happened in order to avoid responsibility. “I didn’t steal it, I was doing him a favor by taking it off his hands!” or “I was just borrowing it!”

Vagueness – This means not being clear by virtue of being poorly expressed or not coherent in meaning. If no one can understand what you mean, how can they hold you responsible? It often gets us “off the hook!”

Victim Stance - a rationalized mental attitude. Example of a negative attitude; if you are a victim, how can you be at fault? If people feel sorry for you they won’t hold you responsible. “If she/he had only understood me, I wouldn’t have done it.” “No one understands me, so why should I try?” “Nothing ever works out for me!”

Grandiosity – This type of “stinkin thinkin” is blowing things out of proportion, creating drama. This can be used to build you up, or to excuse yourself, or to deflect responsibility. “I was too scared to do anything else...; I’m the best, so stay out of my way...”

Making fools of – By making others look foolish you can discount them or write them off; telling yourself their opinions means nothing.

Power play –seen as an aggressive attempt to get your own way through concentration or manipulation of power. Can be seen as a display of anger, like storming out of a room during a disagreement, refusing to listen, and organizing people to get angry at the other person and to support your position.

Suggestibility - Allowing yourself to be misled into doing things you want to do, but know you shouldn’t and at the same time you resist being led toward responsible thinking and behavior.

Lack of empathy for others – to have empathy is to feel for what others feel. To lack empathy is to refuse to take responsibility for others. If you see a situation only in terms of your needs, then you lack empathy for others.

Drama excitement – doing anything for the drama it creates. These people will not take the time and effort to seek appropriate ways to relieve boredom or have fun. Everything had to be a “Big” thing! All for your pleasure.

Procrastination – you don’t do things in a timely manner. Seen as slowness with the consequence of not getting around to it; putting off, delaying or deferring an action to a later time. You put off appointments, paying bills, resolving conflicts, getting a job, being responsible, and the list goes on and on.

Are you ready to make positive changes in your thinking; make wiser choices?

I **choose** to listen to the Holy Spirit living within me, and not to my flesh which encourages the “stinkin thinkin”!

I **choose** to live by choices, not change; to make changes, not excuses; to be motivated, not manipulated; to be useful, not used; to excel, not compete.

I **choose** self-esteem, not self-pity.

I **choose** to allow the Holy Spirit to help me walk on the path of freedom and victory, not the pathway to destruction.

I **choose** to listen to the truth when it is presented to me, not hear only what I want to hear because it makes me feel better.

I **choose** to work on my problems no matter how difficult and painful it may be, trusting that God knows how much I can endure and will walk through each trial with me as I become whole.

I **choose** to entertain positive thoughts that will produce positive actions, not dwell in negative thoughts that snowball into disaster and take charge of my thoughts.

I **choose** to develop proper feelings and new behaviors that overcome self-defeating ones which will help me deal better with stressful situation.

I **choose** enthusiasm as my daily exercise, for I am a competent, capable person and have much to give to life.

I **choose** to be a person who loves, trusts, and is open to others no matter what they say, for my identity is not in whom others think I am, but who I am in Christ Jesus.

I **choose** to constantly strive for spiritual maturity, not let my emotions be the fundamental object of my life.

I **choose** to be responsible for myself and for my actions which will stop the enemy dead in his tracks, thus, allowing healthy choices to be the mainstay of my life.

I CHOOSE WHOLENESS AND LIFE!

As you read the “Stinkin Thinkin” list, you will become aware of how the enemy tries to work in a person’s life. You will see the lack of taking responsibility reveal itself over and over. It is the work of the enemy to discredit your life; to steal, kill and destroy what God has made and declared holy and just in His sight. But the good news is that with the help of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and revealed truth, you learn to make wiser choices that will change your life forever, and bring wholeness.

Start working on the “**I Choose**” list today and be set free!