

## Five Ways Parents Can Turn Their Child's Negative Thoughts Around

Everyone can become consumed by persistent negative thoughts, but parents can assist their child by recognizing the common manifestations of negative thoughts and by offering their child more positive, rational alternatives. As your child learns about cultivating a growth mindset, your help at home can assist them in keeping an open mind and a positive perspective about learning and peer relationships.



### 1. Assuming

Assuming or mind-reading is something we all do. Unfortunately, when we presume to know the thoughts and motivations of others, we often do so in a decidedly negative manner. The next time your child is perhaps convinced that their best friend hates them, remind your child that we should react based on facts, not assumptions. Maybe their friend was having a bad day and was not as sociable as usual. Ask your child to recount a time when others could have misperceived their own actions and attitudes.

### 2. Shoulds, Musts, and Oughts

Whenever we place pressure on ourselves to constantly be perfect, we work ourselves into a stressful frenzy and set ourselves up for eventual disappointment. Having high expectations of oneself is one thing, but often kids judge themselves more harshly than they judge their own worst enemies. Balance and self-compassion are crucial for a growth mindset that understands highs and lows as a natural feature of the journey of self-improvement.

### 3. Fairy Tale Fantasies

Whenever we place demands on ourselves and our futures, expecting them to conform to an unrealistic ideal, we again set ourselves up for disappointment and a relentless quest to fulfill our fantasies. Wanting and working for the best is a worthy goal, as long as we can also accept that dreams get deferred and changes occur. Change and the unexpected (both good and bad) are natural parts of life, and the ability to adapt, refocus, and move on are key components of a growth mindset. Teaching kids to be happy along the journey instead of just obsessing about the destination goes a long way in helping them remain consistently satisfied.

### 4. Over-Generalizing

Over-generalizing is a common mistake that children make. Watch for when your child uses words like *always*, *everyone*, *no one*, and *forever*. Help your child take a deep breath and see situations for what they are—not necessarily as a negative trend or unavoidable curse.

### 5. Catastrophizing

When you see your child take a small, unfortunate event and blow it up into a huge, life-altering occurrence, help them step back and regain perspective and composure. Setbacks are not the end of the world. In fact, they should be accepted and expected as natural parts of the growth process.

Icons from Flaticon