
How to Rewrite Negative Scripts

Mastering emotional triggers by changing mistaken beliefs

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Introduction

Negative scripts is the inner dialog we have in our heads. Albert Ellis, who developed rational-emotive-behavioral therapy, called it “stinking thinking”. Basically, negative scripts are pessimistic ways of thinking about ourselves, others, or the world in general. These scripts are contained in the unconscious mind and play in the background throughout the day. They are subtle, yet powerful. Negative scripts influence how we perceive the world and act in it.



The problem with negative scripts is that they are in fact, negative. They are based on mistaken beliefs we develop during the course of life, from infancy into adulthood. Mistaken beliefs are formed when basic needs in life are not met in a consistent, predictable manner. Experiences are interpreted, organized into files, and stored in the unconscious mind. These files contain positive and/or negative beliefs.

Scripts come from these files. Some are positive, others are negative. The key to a happy, healthy life is to have an abundance of positive files. In order to achieve happiness, old negative files need to be replaced by new positive files. Changing negative scripts will accomplish this task.

How To Rewrite Negative Scripts

Know Your Negative Script(s)

Do you know your negative script(s)? Most of us do. Have you ever listed them? It's not a fun project. Yet, it is necessary if you want to rewrite them into something positive. To get you started, here is a sample. A person is not given a job promotion. The individual might say, *“Why should I bother trying. Nothing good ever comes my way.”* It is a negative script (why bother) based on a mistaken belief system (nothing good happens to me).

Here are a few examples of negative scripts.

“I must have done something wrong.”

“I'm a terrible parent.”

“I never do anything right.”

"I better not, I'll screw it up."
"That's another stupid thing I did."
"I'm going to fail. I know it."
"I'm not good with money."
"No one is going to like me."
"How could anyone be attracted to me."

Identify the Mistaken Belief

Because mistaken beliefs originate in the unconscious mind, they are not always easily identifiable. They usually come into awareness when a basic need is not met. Let me illustrate using the previous example.

Event: Passed on a job promotion.

Negative Script: Why should I bother trying.

Mistaken Belief: Nothing good ever comes my way.

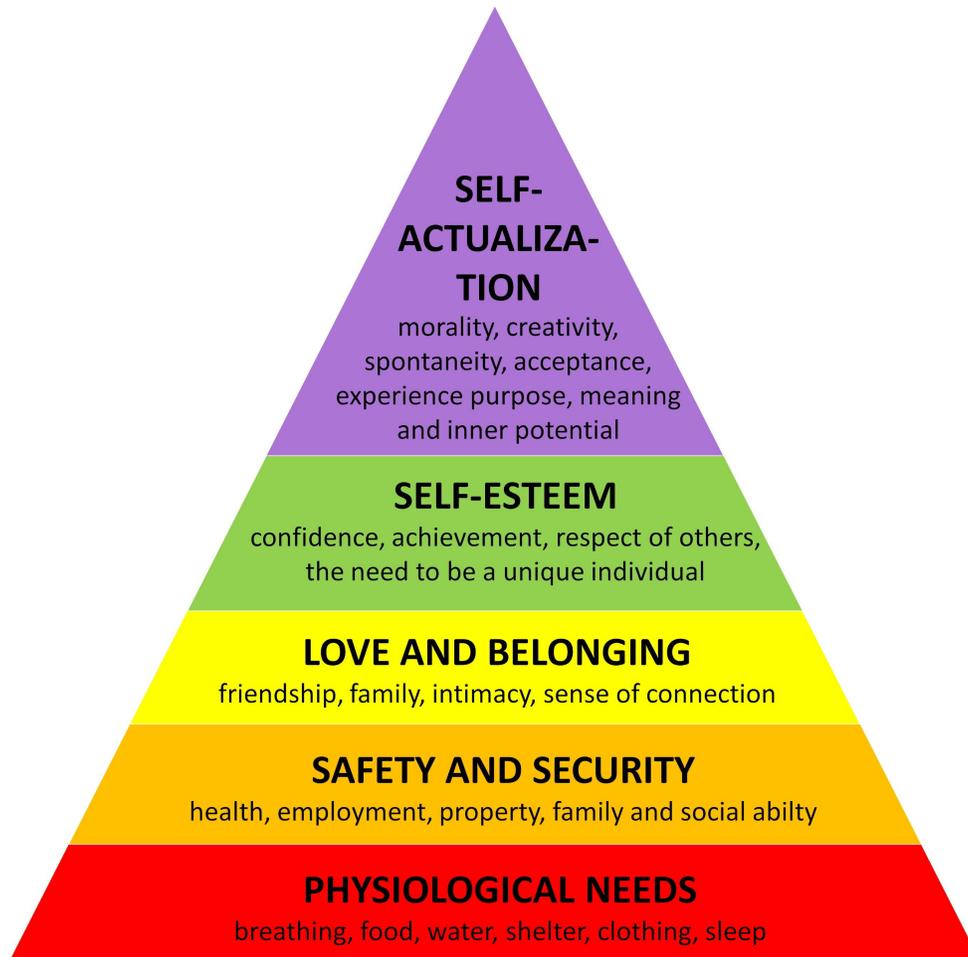
Basic Need: Belonging, or Esteem

Here are some examples of mistaken beliefs.

"I cannot get close to people, they will hurt me."
"I cannot get close to people, they will leave me."
"I have to be perfect."
"I cannot rely on others, therefore I can only depend on myself."
"I am unlovable."
"There is something wrong with me."
"I am defective."
"I will always be alone in the world."
"I cannot trust anyone."
"I don't matter"
"In order to be loved, I have to make others happy."
"In order to be accepted I have to change who I am."
"My needs don't matter."

Tag the Unmet Basic Need

Human beings have basic needs. Abraham Maslow identified these in his hierarchy of needs model (see below). Some are physiological in nature and have to do with basic body function. Others have to do with safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.



These basic needs have to be met in a consistent, predictable manner in order to have a healthy development from infancy to adulthood. If a breach of care happens and these needs are not met adequately, a child registers the experience, interprets it, and files in the implicit memory system located in the unconscious mind. These files form schemas, or ways of thinking about self and/or the world. The schemas are mistaken beliefs. Whenever a bad experience occurs, mistaken beliefs create distortions of perception and negative scripts are replayed in the mind. *“I am angry I did not get the job promotion. Nothing good ever comes my way. Why should I bother trying.”*

Rewrite the Negative Script into a Positive Script

In the following exercise you will learn how to rewrite a negative script into a positive script. In order to do this, you will need to do the following.

1. Know your negative script.
2. Identify the mistaken belief.
3. Tag the unmet need.

For review purposes, negative scripts are ways of thinking in the moment something happens. They emerge from mistaken beliefs we have about ourselves, others, and/or the world. Mistaken beliefs form when basic needs are not met in a consistent, predictable manner from infancy to adulthood.

Below is a chart you can use to do the exercise of rewriting negative scripts. Use the Maslow chart to tag the unmet need associated with the mistaken belief. Some examples are given to illustrate the process and help you get started.

Example #1

Steps	Action Steps
Know Negative Script	Why should I bother trying.
Identify Mistaken Belief	Nothing ever goes my way.
Tag Unmet Basic Need	Esteem - confidence
Rewrite into Positive Script	Things sometimes go my way, just not this time. I can keep on trying with confidence that I can achieve in the future.

Example #2

Steps	Action Steps
Know Negative Script	This relationship is not going to work.
Identify Mistaken Belief	You can't get close to people because they will hurt you.
Tag Unmet Basic Need	Love/belonging - feeling loved and accepted in family-of-origin relationship
Rewrite into Positive Script	This relationship may work. Not everyone in the world will hurt me. I can learn to trust. I deserve to be loved.

Rewriting My Negative Scripts

Negative Script #1

Steps	Action Steps
Know Negative Script	
Identify Mistaken Belief	
Tag Unmet Basic Need	
Rewrite into Positive Script	

Negative Script #2

Steps	Action Steps
Know Negative Script	
Identify Mistaken Belief	
Tag Unmet Basic Need	
Rewrite into Positive Script	

Negative Script #3

Steps	Action Steps
Know Negative Script	
Identify Mistaken Belief	
Tag Unmet Basic Need	
Rewrite into Positive Script	

Negative Script #4

Steps	Action Steps
Know Negative Script	
Identify Mistaken Belief	
Tag Unmet Basic Need	
Rewrite into Positive Script	