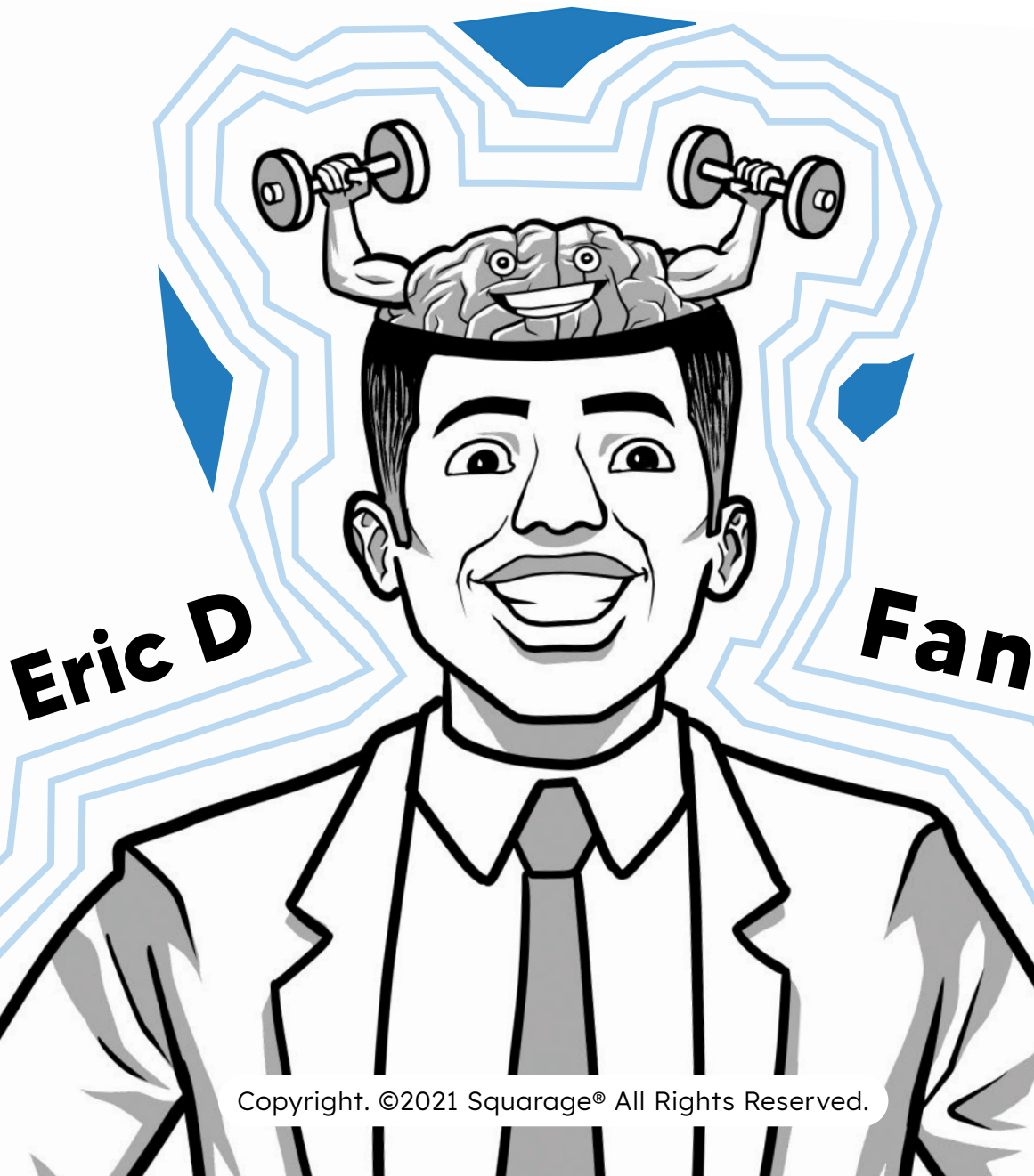


squarage®

BOSS YOUR BRAIN

Hardcore Mental Conditioning for CTE
(Career Technical Education)



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Published in the United States of America



TO MOM AND DAD WHO WERE SENT BY A JEWISH CARPENTER

IT TOOK A VILLAGE:

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Ethan Hedberg, Paul Woo, Anthony Feng, Zack Simon, BaoBao Pao,
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James Shin, Evan Santucci, Eddie Chien, Alister Uy, Roger Moon

Shine and Tiffany Lin, Isaac and Rebekah Lee, Peter and
Kim Lundell, Ed and Vicky Li

HARDCORE MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONING FOR CTE

(CAREER TECHNICAL EDUCATION)

Death came knocking on my door in 2008, and then it came back in 2013 with a vengeance. Finally, in 2017, anxiety and an intense meltdown came upon me like no other. Mental illness made it tough to thrive in the workforce. Now it is my responsibility to help those who limp like me. You'll need to get a good handle on your mental health so you'll be better prepared for the workforce and your career, not just your personal life.

Battling mental illness is like fighting with the mist. The brutality of life will come upon you. Bad things do happen. You will lose some in life, but it doesn't mean you have to be defeated. There are methods and practices you can do to cope, manage, and get through your internal battles.

Be grateful for the pain. Be grateful for the anxiety. Be grateful for the depression because it means you're still alive. It's part of the ecosystem of life. I learned that negative emotions cannot be prevented or avoided, only managed, and then overcome.

Also, you'll learn that the power of life and death is in your tongue. You'll learn how powerful thoughts and words are and how they can become self-fulfilling prophecies. **They say seeing is believing, but sometimes it's believing first that leads to the seeing.**

Anxiety can be beneficial and adaptive. Negative emotions are necessary to help you survive life situations, like the discomfort you feel when you're about to fail a class and that stress leading you to study harder, so you shape up. Anxiety may creep up before your first date, test, tryout, interview, etc. and that's totally normal. But, if the anxiety is so intense that you're unable to show up because you felt you were about to have a heart attack, then we need to address that and work on you.

Mental illness has amplified for the Gen Z and Millennials despite the fact that we have smart phones, flat screen 4K TVs, and can have our kombucha tea delivered to us now. This crisis isn't about stuff, it's about mattering, existence, and self-worth.

Lastly, you will learn through the perspective of a CTE student, Jaden, how to conquer, manage, and overcome mental health struggles by becoming a Verbal Boss, trimming your Negativity Diet, Neutral Thinking, recognizing Cognitive Distortions, and more.

Your problems are not unique. Nothing is new under the sun. You will get through this.



YOU'RE WELCOME.

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CHAPTER 1: **THE TONGUE**

BASEBALL ISN'T AMERICA'S PAST TIME, IT'S AMERICA'S **NAPTIME**.

This is a random baseball player. He's not Bill Buckner, but he choked just like him. Buckner was a baseball player for the Boston Red Sox. In 1986, the Boston Red Sox were about to win their first World Series Championship since 1918. That's 68 years of waiting and suffering! The Red Sox needed just one more out in Game 6 of the 1986 World Series, but Mookie Wilson of the New York Mets had other ideas. Mookie hits a ground ball through the legs of Bill Buckner in one of the most famous choke jobs in sports history. **Biggest. Choke. Job. Ever.** This infamous moment would go on to be replayed a gazillion times for the decades to follow. The Red Sox would go on to lose Game 7, and the rest is history.

Here's the scary thing. 19 days before the game, Bill Buckner said during an interview with Don Shane of WBZ-TV:

“ **The dreams are that you're gonna have a great series and win. The nightmares are that you're gonna let the winning run score on a ground ball through your legs.** ”

He said it and it happened. Do you think Buckner would have choked under pressure if he never said it? I don't know. You don't know. Nobody knows for sure.

BUT TO BE SAFE, STOP SAYING STUPID STUFF OUT LOUD.



THIS IS A RANDOM BASKETBALL PLAYER.

He's no legend like "Pistol" Pete Maravich. Maravich was an NBA throwback legend. Named a Top 50 Greatest Player All-Time amongst many followers of basketball. His legacy is secured.

Here's the scary thing. In 1974, "Pistol" Pete Maravich said to Andy Nuzzo of the Pennsylvania's Beaver County Times:

“ **I don't want to play ten years in the NBA and die of a heart attack at age forty.** ”

Well, he played in the NBA from 1970 until 1980, 10 years like he said. Then he died in the arms of Dr. James Dobson during a pick-up basketball game in Pasadena, California on January 5, 1988. Cause of death? You guessed it; heart attack.

He said it and it happened. Did “Pistol” Pete die because of his own prediction? I don’t know. You don’t know. Nobody knows for sure.

BUT TO BE SAFE, STOP SAYING STUPID STUFF OUT LOUD.



THESE ARE TWO RANDOM FOOTBALL PLAYERS.

These two don’t play professionally like some of the Atlanta Falcon players who contributed to the biggest choke jobs in NFL history when their team, the Atlanta Falcons, allowed the New England Patriots to come back from a 28-3 deficit during Superbowl 51 in 2017. It was the largest comeback in Superbowl history.

Here’s the scary thing. During the 28-3 lead, some Falcon player probably said to himself:

“ Hey, they still got Tom Brady on their side. There is no lead that’s safe. ”

He said it and it happened. Did the Atlanta Falcons lose because of his sideline prediction? I don’t know. You don’t know. Nobody knows for sure.

BUT TO BE SAFE, STOP SAYING STUPID STUFF OUT LOUD.



THIS IS A RANDOM GUY TRAPPED IN A REFRIGERATOR.

In 1973, *Success Unlimited* had a story about a man who (similarly like our random guy), got locked inside one of these box trains. He panics and loses his cool and writes on the wall:

“ It’s so cold, my body is getting numb. If I could just go to sleep. These might be my last words. ”

You guessed it. He said it and it happened. When they did an autopsy on his body, they found out the freezing apparatus temperature was only 56 degrees in the train with plenty of air in the box car.

Doctors determined there was no physical reason for his death. The refrigeration unit of the car was inoperative and unplugged. The verdict? He died from **psycho-genic death**; he thought himself to death, and died.

Did he die because of what he said and wrote? I don’t know. You don’t know. Nobody knows for sure.

BUT TO BE SAFE, STOP SAYING STUPID STUFF OUT LOUD.

**“THE TONGUE HAS
THE POWER OF LIFE
AND DEATH.”**

PROV. 18:21

They say seeing is believing, **but sometimes it's believing first and then seeing.** So, be careful of your thought life.

STEP 1

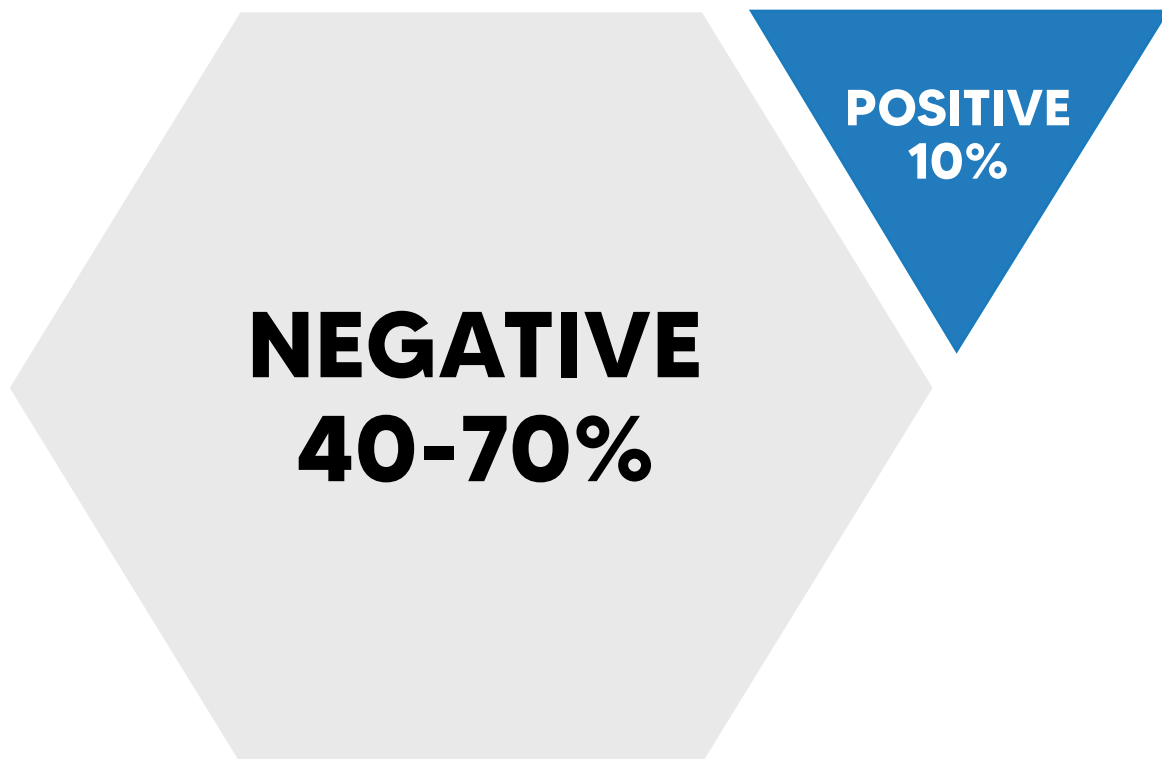
to having good mental health and feeling better about your life is simple.

STOP. SAYING. STUPID. STUFF. OUT.

LOUD.

Stop complaining about the weather, your boss, your teachers, your friends, and your parents. I'm not telling you to be delusional and deny reality. I'm telling you to not make declarations and statements about conclusions verbally because it just might happen.

Christine Porath at Georgetown and Harvard has researched and studied the data and science behind spoken words. Words spoken out loud are more likely to happen because your thoughts transfer into actions that reinforce the thoughts you have, whether negative or positive. If you speak a positive statement out loud, it's 10% more likely to happen. However, if you speak a negative statement out loud, it's 40-70% more likely to happen.



You must become a **Verbal Boss** and control what comes out of your mouth, which we will cover in Chapter 2.



CHAPTER 2:
BECOME A
VERBAL BOSS

Meet Jaden. He's young. He's a student. He's got big dreams with school, career, romance, and more. However, he's had a tough background: poor, single parent, bad neighborhood, you name it. Since he's gone through so much in his young life, he's developed a negative bias about his life and he makes the same mistakes that you're making today; saying stupid stuff out loud.

What if Jaden would just stop saying stupid stuff out loud?

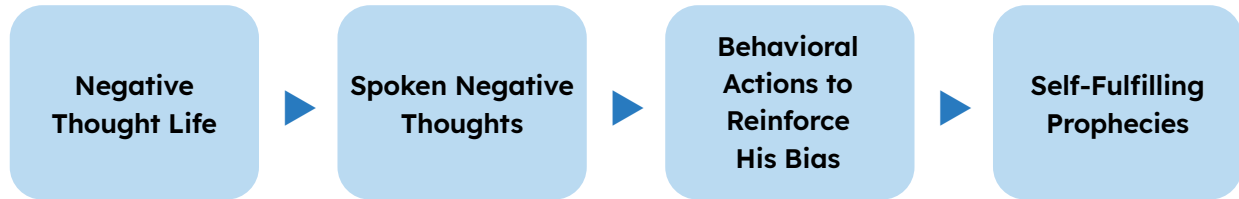
**I'm having a bad day.
I hate bosses. I hate my co-workers. I hate my job.
I'm having a bad semester. I'm going to fail my quizzes.
I hate online distance learning. I hate COVID-19.
I want to see my friends.
I'm feeling anxious and depressed.
Bae doesn't like me back because I'm a nice guy.
I hate this president.**

The first step to increasing Jaden's mental health is becoming a Verbal Boss. A Verbal Boss is very simple to become. All Jaden has to do is stop saying stupid stuff out loud. Simple.

Check this out. Jaden doesn't know that his spoken words are the most powerful agent of negative energy, not his thoughts. Thinking about negative statements or declarations about himself is bad enough, but speaking it out loud is way more toxic and damaging. **Verbalizing his negative internal thoughts is his own death sentence.**

Trevor Moawad says your brain biologically and organically absorbs negativity 7x more easily than it takes in positivity.

Many of the things Jaden **DISLIKES** about his life were put there in place through his **CARELESS** speech because he hasn't yet mastered being a Verbal Boss. His thoughts transferred into his words and his words transferred into behaviors that reinforced his biased view of his own life's situations.



Control Your Controllables. Thinking negatively can actually kill you like that box car refrigerator guy. It's in Jaden's control to cut down on negative speeches about himself. If he cuts it down, his mental health will be freer to think clearly, and that'll be his first step to having better mental health. Stop saying stupid stuff out loud!

Work-Based Activity

How often do you "Observe and Report" like Jaden? List some of the negative statements that you make similarly to Jaden.

For example, "I can't stand my bosses and co-workers." "I hate the weather."
"I hate this teacher."

CONTINUED ►

Becoming a Verbal Boss begins with the simple task of not saying stupid stuff out loud. Fill out the worksheet flow below to see how often your statements have become self-fulfilling prophecies.

**Negative
Thought Life**



**Spoken Negative
Thoughts**



**Behavioral
Actions to
Reinforce
His Bias**



**Self-Fulfilling
Prophecies**

COMPONENT CONCLUSION:

Your thought life leads to your words, which leads to your behavioral actions that reinforce your biases that leads to undesired outcomes.



CHAPTER 3:

NEGATIVITY DIET

LESS NEGATIVITY **BEATS** MORE POSITIVITY

It's not about adding good habits to Jaden's life to improve his mental health and outlook towards life. For Jaden, it's more about subtracting the bad stuff in his life, not adding more good stuff. Let's be honest, not everybody has the discipline to add good habits because they're lazy. Jaden needs to monitor and manage what Trevor Moawad's book, *It Takes What It Takes*, calls the **Negativity Diet**.

It's not about adding things to your life like becoming vegan, plant-based diet, meditation, yoga, etc. it's about cutting out the negative, toxic, bad stuff in your life.

It's about addition by subtraction. Subtraction is less work; easier, and more efficient. We don't have time to add more good stuff.

Jaden needs to think really hard about what's toxic and bad for him so he knows what to eliminate and subtract. He has to make the right choices about what to eliminate like cutting out toxic friends, eating less chips, watching YouTube less, and so on. **You cannot heal in the same place that got you sick.**

If Jaden's friends are negative 51% of the time but positive 49% of the time, they are still negative friends.

Remember, negative energy is more powerful than positive energy. People respond more to negative energy than positive energy. You can have a social media post of 100 positive comments, but all it takes is 1 internet troll to leave a negative comment to ruin your day.

NEGATIVITY DIET

SUBTRACT

Less negative music?

Less office gossip with bosses and co-workers?

Less toxic friends? New crew?

Less political news? Less podcasts?

Eat less chips? Quit drugs?

As Jaden goes through his negativity diet, he will need to ask himself the following questions:

“ Do I stay up late or should I go to bed early so I can be energized for my job? ”

“ Do I go to bed early or should I finish Bridgerton on Netflix? ”

“ Do I go to bed early or should I become a Fortnite gangster? ”

“ Do I keep eating chips and fatty foods as I’m trying to maintain good shape for my varsity basketball team? ”

These are the choices Jaden has to make for himself. These are the questions you have to ask yourself and make for yourself, too.

Jaden will need to stop watching so much political news if it upsets him so much. He’s going to have to start with one simple choice and create momentum into cutting out more bad stuff, but it all starts with one choice.

Jaden needs to be careful with his content consumption because it can destroy his mental health. A lot of content consumption via social media is negative. It takes 5 positive experiences to offset just 1 negative experience. Jaden needs to be careful what he is scrolling through his social media feeds! Psychological thoughts can begin to feel physical if Jaden isn’t careful.

Maybe Jaden has to change up his Netflix queue and watch something that’s more lighthearted than dark. Maybe he can only watch news that doesn’t have commentary

attached to it. Lastly, he may have to switch up his Spotify playlist to something more upbeat.

Trevor Moawad states in his book that the news directly targets our negative-leaning tendencies. Programs in the media are used to weaponize people against other people, so sometimes it's best to cut the noise out. Consuming the wrong negative content will mess you up. The news wants you to think it's doomsday every day. They want you to think that nobody can be trusted. They know we're addicted to bad news.

If Jaden spends most of his day in negative energy and then all of sudden has one good hour of positive energy, it will not do anything for him.

Technology can either light up a city or kill people with electricity. Don't let other people control your choices. Focus on what you need to subtract.

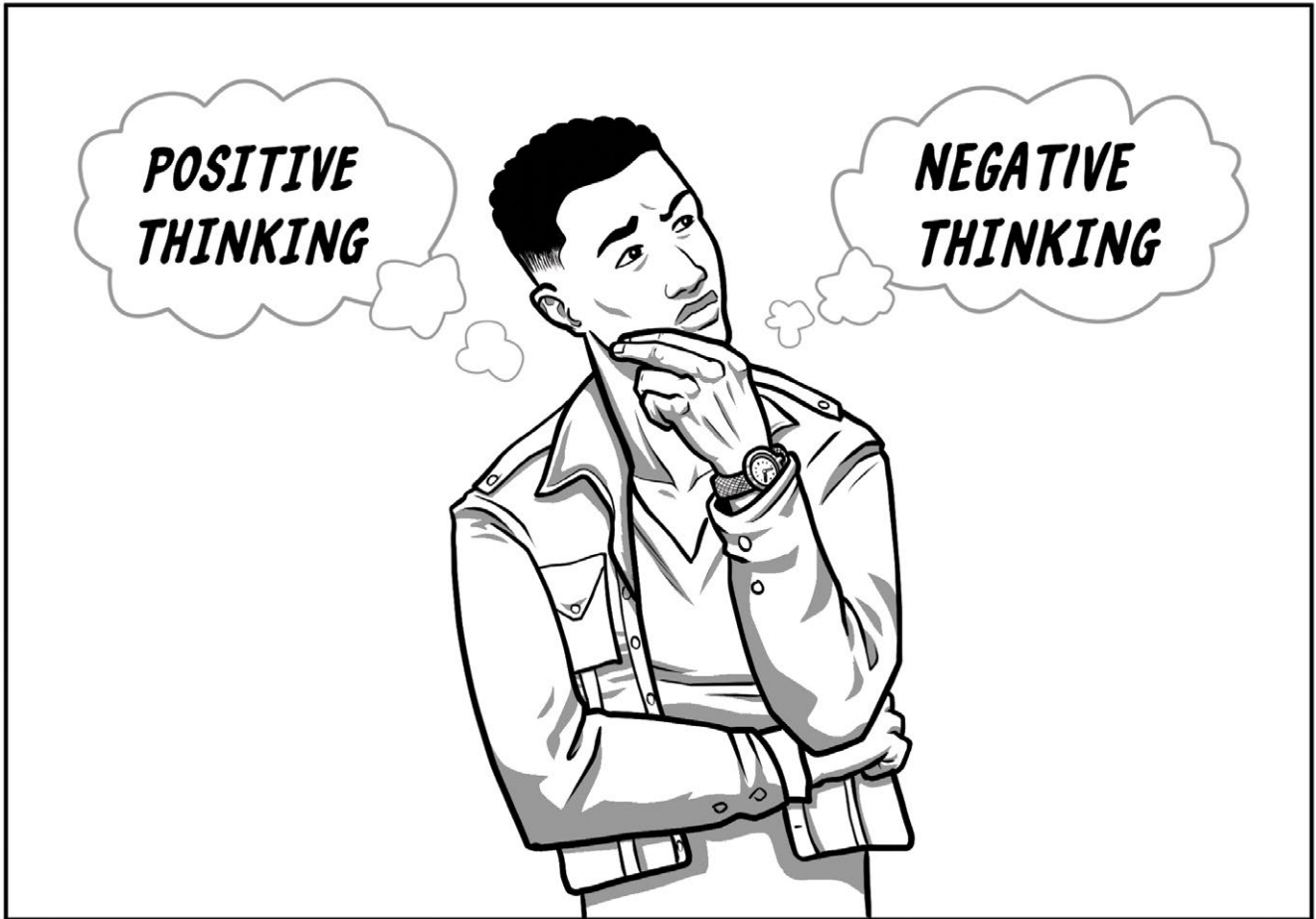
If you don't say stupid stuff out loud but you don't make any changes to your Negativity Diet, then you will not experience as much mental health improvement as you would like.

**SO, DON'T JUST STOP SAYING STUPID STUFF OUT LOUD,
START SUBTRACTING THE STUPID STUFF, TOO.**

Work-Based Activity

NEGATIVITY DIET

Write out the negativity components in your life that you want to subtract from your life.



CHAPTER 4:

NEUTRAL THINKING

Jaden's going through a tough time. He's under-performing at his new job and his bosses and co-workers are upset with him. His home life isn't so great because his parents might get divorced soon. All the bae's he's crushing on keep rejecting him. His crew he hangs around is toxic. Also, he's struggling with his classes.

I'm going to ask Jaden the same question I'm about to ask you. When you're going through the fire of life like job stress, getting rejected by bae, rejected by your dream college, rejected by your dream job, or your parents suddenly drop the news that they're getting divorced — do you think positive or negative thinking is going to get you through whatever you're going through?

POSITIVE THINKING?

I think that's most people's guess. Here's the truth, many people think positive thinking is actually the way to go during tough times, but the reality is positive thinking repulses people:

You're telling me to be positive but my bosses and co-workers keep yelling at me.

You're telling me to be positive but bae keeps rejecting me because I'm a nice guy.

You're telling me to be positive but my parents are getting divorced.

You're telling me to be positive but I hate COVID-19 and online distance learning.

You're telling me to be positive but there's social unrest and rioting going on.

You're telling me to be positive but I hate this president.

You're telling me to be positive but I'm drowning in student loan debt.

Telling people to think positive repulses them. Positive thinking only provides a momentary emotional boost but you'll come back down to your original baseline after the high wears off.

LOOKS LIKE POSITIVE THINKING DIDN'T WORK OUT SO GREAT. SHOULD JADEN TRY NEGATIVE THINKING?

No. Remember, negative energy is one of the most powerful energies in the universe. It's more powerful than positive energy.

Then, if not positive or negative thinking, what's the alternative? What does Jaden do?

IT'S NEUTRAL THINKING. JADEN NEEDS TO THINK NEUTRALLY. NOT POSITIVE. NOT NEGATIVE. BUT NEUTRALLY.

Trevor Moawad created a system called Neutral Thinking. Neutral Thinking is what is going to help you get through your tough times. Thinking neutrally will have you actualize your desired results for your life.

Jaden is going to learn that GOATs in life don't think positive or negatively but neutrally. He's going to realize that it's about taking actions, visualizing the actions, and tweaking his behaviors to get to his desired goals and outcomes.

The next time Jaden is facing some high-stress situation in life, he's going to use **Neutral Thinking** to help him perform at a high level in these pressure situations.

Before we discuss Neutral Thinking, you'll need to understand that just like Jaden, you give too much credit to the past. Do you ever wonder why a lot of sports teams always give up big leads and lose the game? It's because they elevated the past too much and lost their competitive edge. They assumed just because they played great in the 1st Quarter that they'll play great in the 4th Quarter. Not true. Every play in sports is a life of its own. The score needs to be constantly 0 to 0 or you'll give up big leads or you'll give up too soon if you're losing.

Jaden needs to understand every moment in life is a comma, not a period. The story always continues. Jaden gives the past too much credit. It's too important to him. He needs to understand what's happened in the past doesn't have to repeat or influence his future.

Jaden needs to understand every good or bad moment in his life is a life of its own. It doesn't need to influence what comes next. Yes, what happened in Jaden's life matters and it happened, don't be delusional about it. But he can make the right habits, choices, and behaviors to make sure what happens next is favorable for him.

You may have gone through tough times like Jaden or you're going through it right now. You'll need to be in the moment, stay in the moment, and don't think too far ahead. Let's cover what Neutral Thinking is.

NEUTRAL THINKING

- 1) What has happened
- 2) What is happening
- 3) What will happen

Neutral Thinking is real-time based thinking for whatever situation Jaden is going through, good or bad. Instead of focusing on hyping himself up with positive thinking or talking down to himself with negative thinking, he's going to stay in the moment, talk to himself through these 3 simple steps, so that he can get to his desired outcome.

LET'S SEE JADEN USE NEUTRAL THINKING FOR SOME LIFE SITUATIONS THAT HE IS GOING TO GO THROUGH IN HIS LIFE.



NEUTRAL THINKING EXAMPLE #1:

Micro Managers and Cranky Co-workers

The workforce is brutal. Jaden is struggling at his new job because his boss is a micro-manager and his co-workers are usually cranky. The workload is overwhelming and his bosses and co-workers can't stop yelling at him. His boss decides to give him one last opportunity to shape up, or he's going to be fired. Jaden feels the pressure and stress and knows he can't lose this job because he needs to support himself and become independent. Jaden needs to figure out how to crush it at his new job.

WE COULD TRY **POSITIVE THINKING** TO HELP HIM AT HIS JOB:

POSITIVE THINKING:

You're a great employee, Jaden! Your bosses don't know what they're talking about! You got this!

WE COULD TRY **NEGATIVE THINKING** TO HELP HIM AT HIS JOB:

NEGATIVE THINKING:

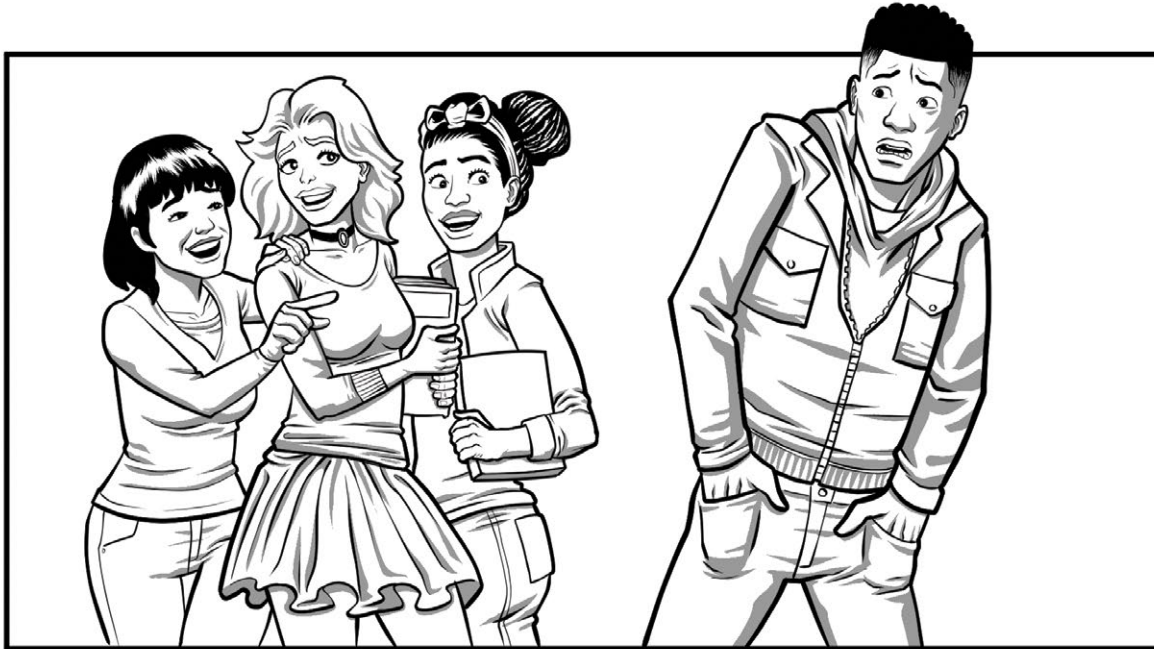
Maybe this just isn't my year. My home life is terrible. School has been tough. Maybe I just need to wait for my life to get better before I can start performing better at my new job.

No. Remember, negative thinking never works and is one of the most powerful forces of energy in the universe.

LET'S TRY NEUTRAL THINKING:

- 1) **What has happened?** Jaden keeps getting reprimanded at his new job for not performing well, and he's struggling with too much on his plate. He's stressed out and overwhelmed by the workload. His bosses and co-workers are frustrated with him. They're threatening to fire him if he doesn't improve his performance soon.
- 2) **What is happening?** Jaden needs to figure out a plan quickly about how to efficiently and effectively finish all of his assignments, or he's going to get fired soon. He ponders and thinks and comes up with some solutions.
- 3) **What will happen?** Jaden decides to ask his boss for an estimate of how much shallow vs deep work he would like him to do. Shallow work being administration, attending meetings, and training. Deep work being assignments that involve more critical thinking. Then, after Jaden seeks clarity and communication about how to prioritize his assignments, he begins to look for a career mentor nearby his cubicle. He looks for somebody that will allow him to ask questions in a safe space so he can learn self-awareness, work ethic, and the company culture.

Good thing Jaden didn't let his emotions get the best of him. He quickly figured out to rely on his Neutral Thinking skills. He stayed in the moment, quickly analyzed what was happening and how to manage the situation. He controlled his controllables and was able to assertively ask his boss for feedback and proactively look for a career mentor.



NEUTRAL THINKING EXAMPLE #2:

Nice Guy: Bae and Thirst Traps

Jaden has his eyes on bae at school. However, sometimes he can be too much of a nice guy and fall hard for her thirst traps. He's still trying to figure out how to get his dream bae to like him back. He struggles with confidence, being bold, and slick. Therefore, he keeps getting rejected by bae. Jaden needs to make some adjustments if he wants to get bae's digits.

WE COULD TRY **POSITIVE THINKING** TO HELP HIM WITH BAE:

POSITIVE THINKING:

**Don't worry Jaden, you're the champ! You got this!
She doesn't know what she's missing. It's her loss!
Onto the next one!**

WE COULD TRY **NEGATIVE THINKING** TO HELP HIM WITH BAE:

NEGATIVE THINKING:

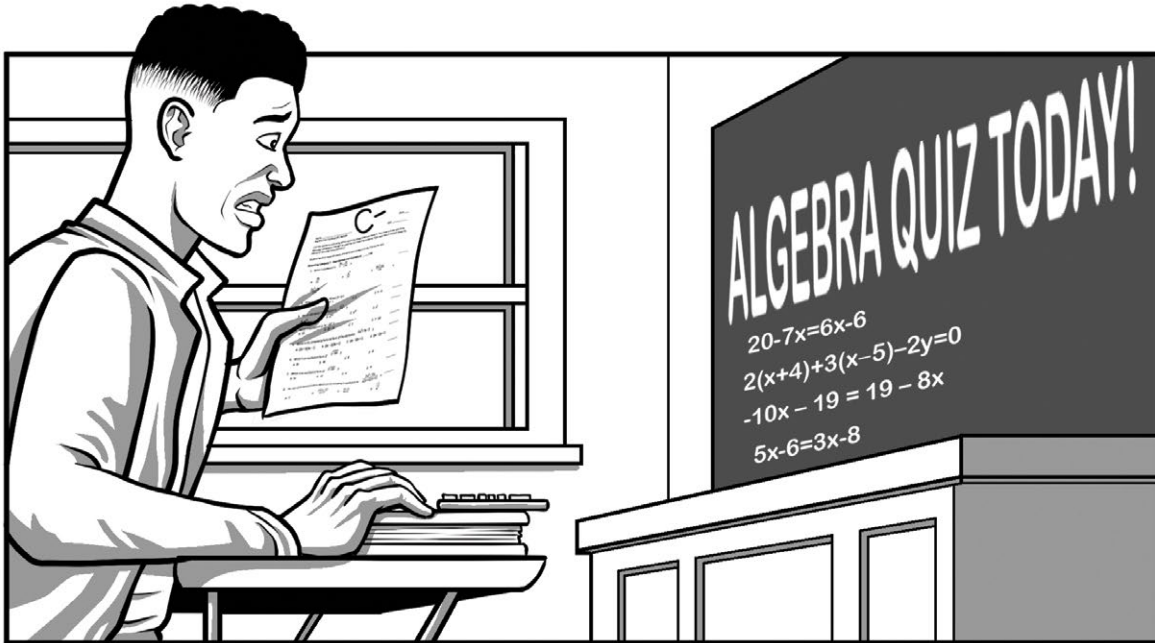
You're dumb. You're not attractive enough. You're not rich enough. You're not slick enough. Aim lower.

No. Remember, negative thinking never works and is one of the most powerful forces of energy in the universe.

LET'S TRY NEUTRAL THINKING:

- 1) **What has happened?** Baes keep rejecting Jaden because he's been trying too hard, too shy, and too much of a nice guy.
- 2) **What is happening?** Jaden needs to find a mentor. He needs somebody to guide him and learn how to better present himself as an assertive gentleman: nicer haircut, slick at sliding DMs, being bold, more direct, flirting, dropping hints, etc. He needs to learn how to become the best version of himself through the guidance of others.
- 3) **What will happen?** If he learns from people who have Jaden's best interest at heart, then he can self-improve and become a better version of himself. He'll grow in confidence, become more direct, and shoot his shots more upfront instead of beating around the bush.

Instead of being mopey and feeling sorry for himself (negative thinking) or hyping himself up as God's gift to women (positive thinking), he goes for neutral thinking. He quickly identifies the problem, attempts to figure out a plan of action, and executes the plan to increase his chances of getting a bae to like him back next time. Instead of asking **"Why is this happening?"** he should be asking **"What must I do?"** That's Neutral Thinking — being in the moment. Each moment, good or bad, has a life its own. Not letting the past negative outcomes (bae rejections) directly affect his next outcomes.



NEUTRAL THINKING EXAMPLE #3:

Jaden's Math Class

C- ... That's Jaden's current grade in his math class. He's playing with fire being that close to failing. He knows he has to end the semester with a B in his math class so his GPA will be solid overall. He needs a good GPA so he can go to college and make a good life for himself. Jaden is going to need to make some adjustments if he wants to end up with that B in math class.

WE COULD TRY **POSITIVE THINKING** TO HELP HIM WITH HIS MATH CLASS:

POSITIVE THINKING:

You're smart! You got this! Just believe in yourself.

WE COULD TRY **NEGATIVE THINKING** TO HELP HIM WITH HIS MATH CLASS:

NEGATIVE THINKING:

You're an idiot. You're dumb. You shouldn't have been so lazy and played so much Minecraft and Fortnite.

No. Remember, negative thinking never works and is one of the most powerful forces of energy in the universe.

LET'S TRY NEUTRAL THINKING:

- 1) **What has happened?** Jaden has a C- in his math class and will need to crush his final to get a B for the semester so his overall GPA will be good enough to go to a solid college.

- 2) **What is happening?** He's going to have to do what he hates most: study, sacrifice his upcoming weekends, and stop being a Fortnite gangster. Also, his PlayStation 5 is going to have to collect some dust for a minute. Also, he may have to bribe the most hardcore nerd in class to tutor him for the upcoming final, too.
 - 3) **What will happen?** If Jaden gives up his weekends to study, gets tutored by the best nerd in class, and puts down the video games, then he'll increase his odds of getting a B in his math class.
-

Jaden is getting the hang of Neutral Thinking. He's realizing when he's feeling the most stress and pressure in life that he has to figure out the appropriate plan of actions to take instead of speaking positive things to himself. He's taking more action and doing less talking. He's making better changes for his grades so he can better his life in the future.

YOU CAN SOLVE YOUR EVERYDAY LIFE PROBLEMS THROUGH

NEUTRAL THINKING.

STOP, PAUSE, AND REFLECT QUICKLY ON WHAT JUST HAPPENED,
WHAT IS HAPPENING, AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN. BE IN THE MOMENT
AND ANALYZE WHAT ACTIONS YOU NEED TO TAKE TO RESOLVE
YOUR CURRENT PROBLEM(S).

Work-Based Activity

NEUTRAL THINKING

is a 3-step truth-based thinking that allows you stop, pause, process quickly, and take action for your daily life stresses (job, school, dating, etc.). Think of a situation you're currently struggling with. Apply Neutral Thinking to the situation by writing your thoughts down below.

1) What has happened?

2) What has happening?

CONTINUED ►

3) What will happen?



CHAPTER 5:

MENTAL DISTORTIONS: FAKE-FAILING IS A DISEASE

FAKE-FAILING IS A DISEASE.

Jaden thinks he's a big failure because his Instagram post only got 100 likes instead of 1,000. He thinks he's a failure because he lost a basketball game. He thinks he's a failure because he felt for bae's thirst trap and slid a DM to bae but she didn't like him back. Lastly, he thinks he's a failure because somebody else got a summer internship he wanted because the recruiter subjectively liked another candidate better.

Fake-failing is a disease. Jaden's not a failure. His mind tricked him into believing one or two bad events equates to being a failure. You know what he's actually going through? **Micro. Micro. Micro. Micro.**

Micro. Micro. Micro. Micro setbacks.

I'm blown away by what Jaden and the youth today consider a failure: losing a basketball game, not getting your dream job, someone didn't think you were pretty, a TikTok video getting 1,000 views instead of 10,000, or not getting into your dream college. These are micro, micro, micro setbacks. **Fake-failing is a disease.** It's not failure, it's just a micro-setback.

Jaden is a lot like you. His mind plays games with himself. His mind tells him small truths about himself that turn into big lies. Exaggerated small truths. Distortions.

FAKE FAILING EXAMPLES

- **10 likes instead of 1000 likes on social media**
- **Someone doesn't think you're pretty**
- **Someone else got your dream job**
- **Losing a basketball game**
- **Bae rejecting you**
- **Someone else won ASB president**



MANAGING YOUR THOUGHT LIFE AND MENTAL DISTORTIONS:
FEELINGS ARE NOT FACTS

**“HOW A MAN
THINKS, SO HE SHALL
BECOME.”**

PROV. 23:7

Jaden is going to have to learn how to manage his thought life or it will lead to gross mental distortions of himself such as this mirror image above. His mind is a lot like yours. It will create exaggerated negative thoughts based on one or two life experiences. His mind works like this image where it distorts and exaggerates the truth about himself.

Jaden is going to have to learn how to take his thoughts captive to the obedience of what is true. He'll have to cross-examine his mind and thoughts and put them on the stand like he was a lawyer in a courtroom interrogating and cross-examining his thoughts in front of a judge and jury.

Dr. David Burns wrote *Feeling Good* and he said all of your moods and emotions are created by your "cognitions" or thoughts. Dr. Burns says most of your negative emotions like depression, anxiety, fear, are caused by your negative thoughts having a highly exaggerated distortion about yourself. These are called "**gross distortions.**"

This is what Jaden is going through — gross distortions. His negative thoughts are creating exaggerations of himself. His negative thoughts are going to feel valid, feel real, and feel like it's the truth. But his depression is probably not based on accurate or permanent perceptions of reality, but just exaggerated small truths about himself. That's wrong. That's inaccurate. That's not right. He needs to fix his thought life.

Jaden's emotions result entirely from the way he looks at things.



Feelings are NOT facts. Your thoughts lead to your emotions, not the other way around. So, think of it like a bunch of sheep following the mother sheep down a cliff. Just because the sheep follow the mother sheep doesn't mean she was leading them in the right direction. Just because you're thinking a negative thought about yourself doesn't make it true. You don't want to be like these baby sheep that are about to fall off a cliff because they believed whatever they felt to be true about themselves.

JADEN CREATING HIS OWN HELL

Jaden is also believing another lie. He thinks achievements will bring him happiness. It won't. It'll bring him satisfaction, but not happiness. Dr. Burns says self-worth that comes from accomplishments is called "pseudo-esteem," and it's not real.

Jaden thinks a lot like you. Jaden thinks that he can base his self-worth and happiness on his looks, social media followers, talent, fame, bae, popularity, and money. Marilyn Monroe, Robin Williams, Anthony Bourdain, Avicci, Freddie Prinz, and many other famous, rich suicide victims would have something to say about this matter.

Many celebrities and successful people are very much loved but still very depressed. In the end, Jaden's own sense of self-worth determines how he will feel. So, it doesn't matter if someone says he's great, if he doesn't believe it for himself, he will still feel depressed about himself.

When Jaden is going through depression and anxiety, he will lose his ability to think clearly. He'll have trouble putting things in the right proper perspective. The negative events that happen can dominate his reality to the point where he can't tell what is real and what is fake because everything is so distorted that he can't even take a compliment anymore or accept that he's smart once he gets an A on a test. Jaden's distortions will feel very real. **His illusion of hell he created in his mind will be very, very convincing. Jaden created his own hell through his distorted thoughts about himself. He has to better manage his thought life.**

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY

Dr. Burn's *Feeling Good* covers cognitive behavior therapy concepts. Jaden is going to have to learn some of these concepts the next time he's feeling depressed and stressed out. Let's simplify and shorten the concepts for Jaden.

Whenever Jaden is going through negative thoughts, depression, or stress, he'll need to quickly determine which mental distortion his emotions and thoughts fall under:

1. CATASTROPHIZING.

Catastrophizing is acting like every small bad event that happens to Jaden is a doomsday end of the world event — blowing things out of proportions, and highly exaggerating a bad negative event. Sorry, Jaden but you don't possess so much power in the universe that one singular bad event can make such an impact on the world. You're not that special.

2. ALL-OR-NOTHING THINKING.

This is when Jaden sees outcomes in only black and white. If Jaden doesn't get bae, then his life is over. If Jaden gets rejected by his dream job, then his life is meaningless. If Jaden gets a C on a test, then he's a bad student. If Jaden has a bad day at practice, then he's a terrible basketball player. Jaden sees one negative event or day and self-determines that life is over and he's a failure. It's seeing every event in life as an A+ or F-performance. There are no in between and room for grey (B, C, D, etc.). Jaden is always going to be miserable if he assesses his life experiences in such black and white extremes.

3. MENTAL FILTER.

Jaden's mind decides to single out ONE negative bad event and dwells upon it for the entire day. He picks out a single negative event and blocks out all the other positive events going on in his life. **Think of it as a drop of dark ink in a pool of clear water.** Jaden singles out that he got a C on his test, but ignores the fact that his family loves him, he's got great health, and he's been turning his life around. Why? Because he only focuses on that one drop of ink, instead of the majority of the clear water.

Mental filter is also when Jaden compares himself to the top 1% of the 1% of the 1%.

Of course, he's going to feel terrible if he only looks at the top 1% that are better off than him. What about the 99% of people that Jaden excels above? His mind will focus on the one person that has it better than him in life but ignore all the other people that he has it better than.

4. DISCOUNTING POSITIVES.

Jaden has a bad habit of rejecting compliments and positive experiences. For some odd reason, when he does poorly in life, he gives himself all the credit of blame for the bad performance. However, whenever he does something good in his life and people give him credit for it, he can't seem to accept it, as if it **"doesn't count."** So, if he does something bad, he deserves credit for it, but if he does something good, he deserves no credit for

it. That's odd, Jaden. Knock it off. Give yourself love when you deserve it. He's putting himself in a lose-lose situation by doing this because he'll never accept any compliments or praise about himself, only criticisms.

5. JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS.

Jaden thinks he's a fortune teller. He thinks he has this amazing gift to just tell the future for himself. **Sorry, Jaden, you don't.** Jaden is really bad at interpreting, forecasting, and predicting his own future and conclusion to his life story. Jumping to conclusions is when Jaden's mind makes up a narrative of how every situation is going to play out and end. For example, he thinks nobody will hire him because he got rejected for one job. He thinks no girl will ever go out with him because of one rejection. He thinks he'll never do well in college because one college rejected him. He thinks he'll never become successful because his boss got mad at him one time. **This is called Fortune Teller Error.**

Jaden needs to pretend he's a lawyer cross-examining his brain on the stand in front of a judge. Whenever he is feeling stress or negativity from an event, he has to ask himself questions that will hopefully reveal which mental distortion his thought(s) is currently falling under. So, the next time something bad happens to Jaden or you, stop and ask yourself what is your thought and which distortion category trap is it falling under?

Work-Based Activity

FAKE-FAILING IS A DISEASE.

Write out an example where you have been fake-failing and overreacting to negative events in your life, and which cognitive distortions apply to your situation.

CONTINUED ►

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1. **DETERMINE YOUR STRESSFUL SITUATION**
 2. **IDENTIFY WHICH COGNITIVE DISTORTION(S) IT APPLIES TO.**
 3. **REASON WITH YOURSELF THAT IT'S A GROSS EXAGGERATION AND DISTORTION OF REALITY.**

Example:

1. **Stressful Situation:** I didn't get a summer internship job at Tesla, so I'm super stressed out and my life is over. If I can't get into my dream job, then I can't be happy and have a good life. My life won't turn out like the way I want it to.
2. **Cognitive Distortions:** All-Or-Nothing Thinking and Jumping to Conclusions.
3. **Reasonings: All-Or-Nothing Thinking** because that's absurd to think if I can't get into Tesla then my life is over and I can't have a good life because there are plenty of other good companies that can offer me a good future. One company doesn't possess enough power to alter my life's trajectory.

Jumping to conclusions because I don't know how my life will play out just because I didn't get into Tesla. I can't see into the future because there are too many unpredictable variables. I'm a terrible fortune teller and I can't time-travel into the future to see how things play out.

- 1) **Stressful Situation:**
-
-

CONTINUED ►

2) Cognitive Distortions:

3) Reasonings:



CHAPTER 6: FLIPS

Jaden only has 24 hours per day. His problem is that he goes through each day giving too many flips in situations that do not deserve it. He gives a flip about his bosses being mean to him. He gives a flip that an opposing player gave him a hard foul. He gave a flip about his teacher being unreasonable. He gave a flip because his favorite show got cancelled. He needs to reserve his flips to only the important things in life: friends, family, school, sushi, and Game of Thrones. When a person has no more problems in his life, his mind will automatically find a way to create new ones. When you run out of things to worry about, your mind will create some for you.

5 FLIPS PER DAY

Mark Manson's *A Counter Intuitive Approach to Live a Good Life* says everyday will have a series of problems. Life is an endless ecosystem of problems; good and bad. Everybody's got problems. Elon Musk has problems. Jeff Bezos has problems. The hobo down your street has problems, too. Some just have better problems than others.

So, Jaden is going to have to understand that he only has bandwidth to give 5 flips per day. Once he goes over 5, he will burn out and have a meltdown. Problems in life will be never ending. When you resolve one issue, another one arises. If you want a clean farm, then don't have any animals, and don't produce any harvest worth selling. When Jaden got a new job, he knew he would have to wake up early and stay up late while dealing with difficult bosses and co-workers. When he decided to pursue college, he knew he was going to have to study harder and sacrifice his weekends with his friends. When he got a license to start driving, he knew he was going to have put up with people cutting him off or flipping him off on the streets. Problems will always be there.

If Jaden wants to become happier and have better mental health, then he's going to have to reserve his flips for what truly matters only, to save his energy. He's going to have to get better at solving problems. Happiness comes from solving life's problems, not preventing or not having them.

STRESS = CALL-TO-ACTION

Manson says when you're feeling negative emotions or stress, it means it's time for a call-to-action. When you feel stress, it means you need to do something about it. If you take the right appropriate action, your body rewards you with relief and positive emotions. Remember, when you're going through a negative emotion, it means you need to stop and quickly process what you need to do. Manson also says, just because something feels good doesn't mean it is good. Just because something feels bad doesn't mean it is bad.

Manson writes: **An obsession and overinvestment in emotions fails us for the simple reason that emotions never last. Whatever makes us happy today will no longer make us happy tomorrow, because our biology always needs something more. A fixation on happiness inevitably amounts to a never-ending pursuit of “something else” – a new house, a new relationship, another child, another pay raise.**

SOCIAL MEDIA = NICOTINE

SOCIAL MEDIA IS THE NICOTINE OF OUR GENERATION.

Jaden's brain wasn't meant to take on that much stimulation all the time. Being inundated with constant images of pretty people and successful people is going to trigger his **OCD (Obsessive Comparison Disorder)**.

Social media causes everybody to struggle with OCD because we're addicted to people telling us we're pretty, smart, talented, athletic, etc. People struggle with OCD because they have a hard time accepting that they're likely pretty average. The problem with technology and social media is that it tells you that you have to be the prettiest, smartest, richest, or you can't be happy. Social media creates unrealistic expectations for Jaden. It causes Jaden to go to extreme measures to get better for more self-worth and self-assurance. If Jaden can limit his social media usage, then he will see an increase in his mental health.

Manson says a lot of people are afraid to accept that they are mediocre because they believe if they accept it, then they'll never achieve anything, never improve, and their lives won't matter. That's dangerous because if that were true, then the majority of mankind is pathetic and pointless because most people are indeed average.

The quicker you can accept that life can be beautiful while being a mediocre human being, then the sooner you can be at peace with your life and yourself.

Work-Based Activity

THINGS I GIVE A FLIP ABOUT:

Write out all the things you give a flip about currently, then trim the list and subtract some flips from your life because you should only give 5 flips per day to avoid burnout.





















CHAPTER 7:

4TH QUARTER CLUTCH: PRESSURE IS A PRIVILEGE

“PRESSURE MAKES DIAMONDS.”

GEORGE S. PATTON JR.

Life is going to have pressure. Life will feel like the 4th Quarter of a ball game. There's pressure in the 4th Quarter in life for everybody: athletes, students, parents, employees, etc. Life will have pressure and obstacles.

Trevor Moawad says pressure is a privilege. Pressure means what you're doing has meaning and importance. It means somebody is relying on you to come through. Jaden has to understand that those who are under the most amount of pressure can have the greatest victories. That's how GOATs are made. Jaden needs to run after pressure, not away from it.

Mental health comes from repetition of exposure. **Exposure means engaging with the pressure and not evading from it.** Before Jaden is on his way to having better mental health, he'll need to grasp a few more concepts below:



BREATHE

Jaden needs to understand that to live life is to understand that anxiety will come as part of the package. He may or may not experience panic attacks throughout his life, but he needs to know that panic attacks hurt, suck, and feel like he's going to die. But people do not die from panic attacks. It's not possible. The physical discomfort may be too much to handle for Jaden, but the anxiety will not physically hurt him.

So, Jaden will need to learn that breathing well and right can help offset his anxiety symptoms like a water sprinkler calming down the fires. Breathing well and deeply will calm his internal stresses. Jaden needs to see breathing as a weapon that's for him, not against him. Jaden needs to first practice breathing under **NON-STRESSFUL** situations, not stressful ones. It needs to become his habit and a daily exercise so that when stressful situations do come and trigger his anxiety, it will become his second nature to breathe deeply and combat the anxiety.

DEEP BREATH IN FOR 3 SECONDS.
DEEP BREATH OUT FOR 3 SECONDS.
REPEAT 3X.

BREATHING IS JADEN'S BFF.

EXPOSURE AND IMPRINTING

Remember, pressure is a privilege. It means what Jaden is about to do means something and people are relying on him to deliver. Many times, people will run away from pressure situations, but it's actually a call to engage it; **EXPOSURE**. The best thing Jaden can do in high-pressure situations like an interview, first date, test, quiz, etc., is to move towards the stressful situation. **EXPOSURE**.

In addition, Jaden needs a little bit of confidence in himself before he can move towards that high-pressure situation so he'll do a simple exercise called **IMPRINTING**. Trevor Moawad said **IMPRINTING** is where Jaden will get a 3x5 notecard and write down specific memories of strong performances and review and relive them before his big interview, big test, first date, big quiz or test, etc.

Jaden will need to do this exercise because words trigger images, which influence his emotions, which leads to his performances. So, Jaden will write down the times he was clutch in his life whether it was hitting a buzzer beater, acing a difficult test, or taking bae to prom, etc.

IMPRINTING

- **Getting a summer job**
- **Buzzer beater in a basketball game**
- **Asked bae to prom**
- **A+ on a math test**

BREAKTHROUGH: FORGIVENESS AND GRATITUDE

Jaden is almost there. He's getting so much better with his mental health. But, he's still angry at some people in his life whether it'd be bosses, co-workers, teachers, family, or friends who have wronged him in the past.

Jaden needs to understand that people are conditioned to fail and disappoint. If Jaden truly wants to experience a breakthrough in his life, then he'll need to forgive the people that have wronged him. He'll have to let it go. He'll have to begin this healing journey process. He needs to start with one choice.

Also, Jaden needs to be grateful for his life and the people (good and bad) in it. Because he could've been a chair. He could've been a table. He could've been a water bottle. The probability of him being a human being in this universe is slim to begin with. He's very blessed to be a human and not a table.

GIVE-UP-ITIS

There will be times when Jaden wants to give up on life, but he can't fall for "give-up-itis." If Viktor Frankl didn't give up, then there's no way Jaden can give up. Viktor Frankl was a holocaust survivor who survived 5 concentration camps during World War II. 5 concentration camps! Viktor was beaten, mistreated, and tortured, and he said that once a prisoner decided to "give up", they would die in a 72-hour window after they made the decision to give up.

Dr. John Leach calls this “Give-up-itis”, and it is when people lose their will to live and actually do die after excessive trauma. It’s like the box car guy who froze to death because of psychogenic death — he thought himself to death. So, Jaden is going to have to make the conscious choice to not give up when things get tough in his life. His life might literally depend on it.



COMMA, NOT PERIOD

Jaden will need to understand that every moment (good or bad) in his life is a comma, not a period. So, he cannot overreact to every good or bad event that happens in his life because the story will always continue. Life doesn’t end because something good or bad happened to him.

Trevor Moawad said the concept of living neutrally is putting a comma after every event and knowing that the next words and actions will determine how the sentence plays out. Jaden is now tougher, stronger, and more mentally healthy because of his mental conditioning practices:

RECAP

- **Verbal Boss**
- **Negativity Diet**
- **Neutral Thinking**
- **Mental Distortions:**
Cognitive Behavior Therapy
- **Giving Less Flips Out**
- **Breathing**
- **Imprinting**

Since Jaden has done all of the mental exercises from this curriculum consistently, he'll begin to see improvements in his mental health, career, school, and more. This means his bosses, co-workers, teachers, and family will be proud of him for being clutch in his personal and professional life.

Jaden's mental health has improved a lot because he's learned to manage his negativity diet, become a verbal boss, practice neutral thinking, cognitive behavior therapy, and give less flips about things that don't matter. Jaden's like you. He's going to make it. You may experience losses, but it doesn't mean you have to be defeated.

**YOU'RE
GOING TO
MAKE IT LIKE
JADEN.**

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