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# Making rigid thoughts flexible



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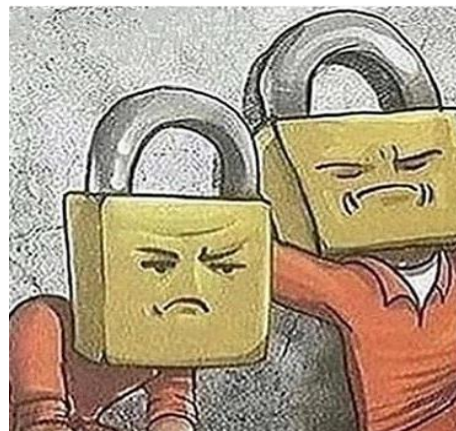
## STRESS MANAGEMENT PRACTICE - “MAKING RIGID THOUGHTS, FLEXIBLE”

The rigid (closed) thoughts that overwhelm us during stressful periods of our lives block us from reacting in a positive and helpful way. Some rigid thoughts begin with:

- I always....
- I will never....
- I have to/It's necessary to.....
- I have no choice but....
- Definitely.....
- It's right /wrong to.....
- Nobody.....

### Examples:

- I always fail
- I will never make friends
- I have no choice but to give up



**Write your own rigid thoughts on a piece of paper, fold it and place it in the bowl .**

On the other hand, flexible **thoughts** give us time to reflect on our reactions, to give ourselves a chance to respond more appropriately and effectively. Let's try to make those thoughts a little more flexible: Flexible thoughts start with sentences like:

- Sometimes it's like this, but sometimes.....
- Maybe....
- It's possible.....
- Although.....
- Even if....
- In the past..... but now..
- In the future I will....



### Examples:

- Maybe I'll fail now, but maybe next time I'll succeed.
- Although I don't have new friends now, I am sure that I will soon make new friends.



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**Choose from the ball a piece of paper with a rigid thought and make it flexible and write it on the other side. Let your classmates help you.**

Making flexible thoughts (some help)

<b>Rigid Thoughts</b>	<b>Flexible thoughts</b>
I always end up losing!	Sometimes I lose, sometimes I do well. That's life.
They never listen to me!	It happens sometimes that people don't listen to me.
It does no good to be polite!	Sometimes you don't get rewarded for your kindness, but sometimes it happens...
Nobody really loves me!	Some people like us, some people don't like us. Nobody is liked by everybody.
I'm completely useless	Maybe I'm failing now, but I've had successes in the past and I can find a way to do it again.
All gone. There's no hope!	Although it seems like all is lost and there is no hope, it is possible that things will change in time.
I'm worthless!	Even if I feel like a failure, I will probably succeed in other areas.
I'm worthless!	Sometimes things don't go my way, but other times I succeed.
I'll be alone forever!	Even though I'm a loner now, things may change in the future.
No matter what I do	If I try hard, a lot of things can change.



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