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The Substitution Method

A gentle practice for catching a negative thought before it takes root

A FREE PRACTICE GUIDE

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A gentle practice for catching a negative thought before it takes root

Imagine sending a text or email and spotting a mistake a second after it goes. A tiny, quiet thought just drifts through your head. “I’m so careless.” “Now they won’t take me seriously.” “I should have read it one more time.” It’s so small you don’t even bother to challenge it, so it just sits there, looping in the background of your day. You think it tomorrow, and the next day, until eventually, it stops feeling like a random bad mood and starts feeling like the absolute truth about who you are. This is exactly how a thought becomes a belief about who you are. It repeats on autopilot for so long that your brain accepts it as a fact.

The Substitution Method works the same way in reverse. You catch the thought before it repeats a second time, then substitute it with something truer and kinder, on purpose, in that same moment, and repeat it each time the thought returns. Repeated enough times, **the truer thought becomes the one that comes automatically**, and that’s the one that shapes what you believe.

1

CATCH

Notice the thought the moment it arrives, before it has looped even once. Name it exactly, even silently: “I’m so careless.”

2

SUBSTITUTE

Replace it with a thought that is true and kind to you, on purpose, in that same moment. Say it, even quietly, so it has a chance to take root: “I missed one typo, and I can fix it.”

3

REPEAT

Each time the thought returns, catch it and say the substitute again. It can happen entirely in your mind.

TRY IT NOW

Three common substitutions to borrow until you find your own words

THE THOUGHT THAT REPEATS	THE TRUER AND KINDER THOUGHT TO SUBSTITUTE
“I’m so careless.”	I missed one typo, and I can fix it.
“Now they won’t take me seriously.”	One typo is a small part of the message, and the meaning still comes through.
“I should have read it one more time.”	Next time I can read it one more time before I send.

Your perspective creates your reality. What you choose to believe as true will become true for you, so choose the thought that’s actually worth repeating.

Why the Substitution Works

A negative thought presents an interpretation as if it were a fact. “I’m so careless” takes one typo and turns it into a statement about who you are. The substitute returns to what actually happened: “I missed one typo, and I can fix it.” That line is truer and kinder than the original, and it works because it is accurate. The positive feeling follows from that.

THE THOUGHT

“I’m so careless.”

An interpretation of what happened.

WHAT HAPPENED

One typo in one message.

The fact the thought started from.

THE SUBSTITUTE

“I missed one typo, and I can fix it.”

Says what happened, and is kind to you.